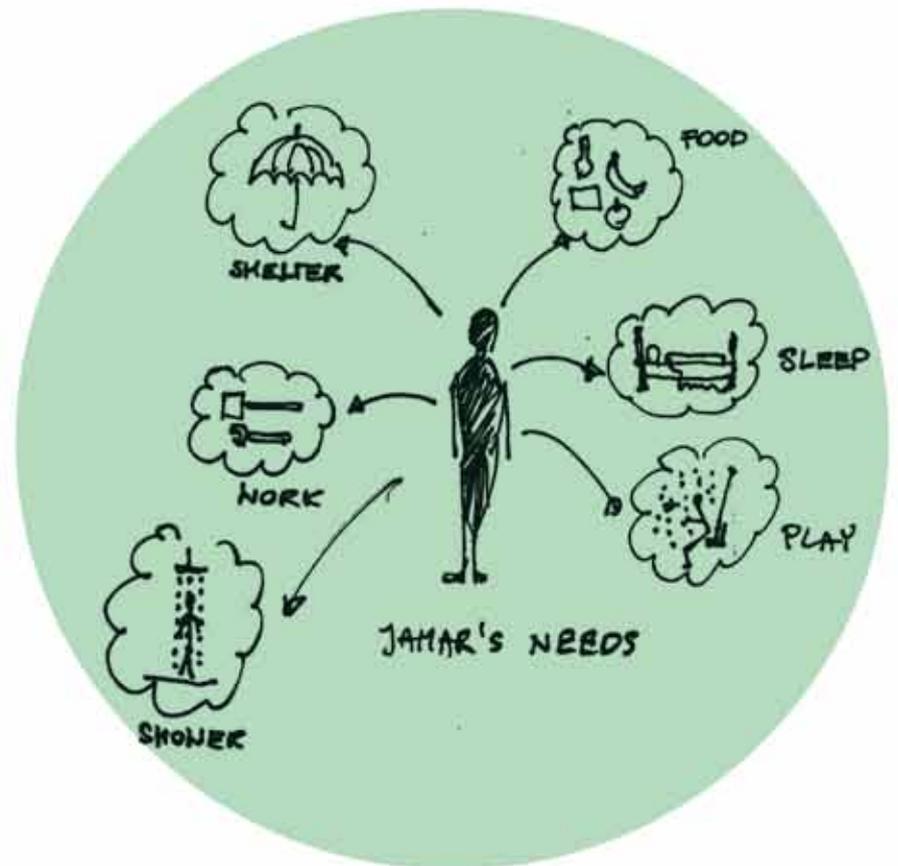
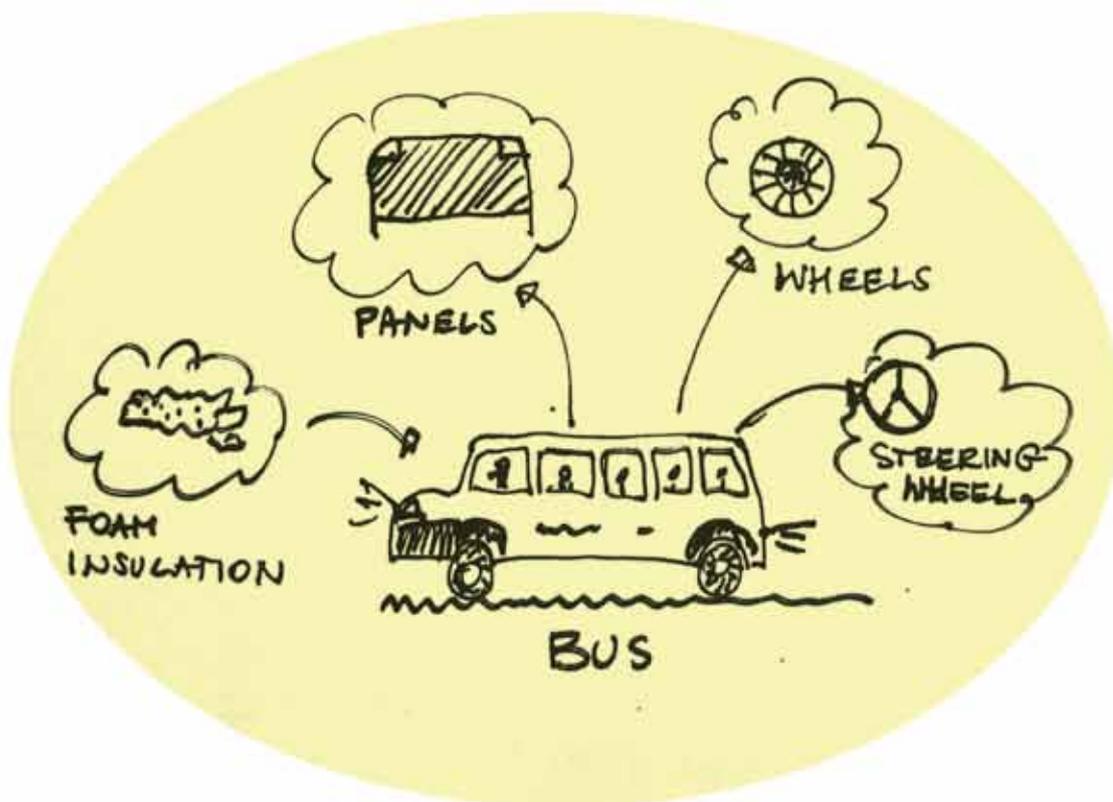
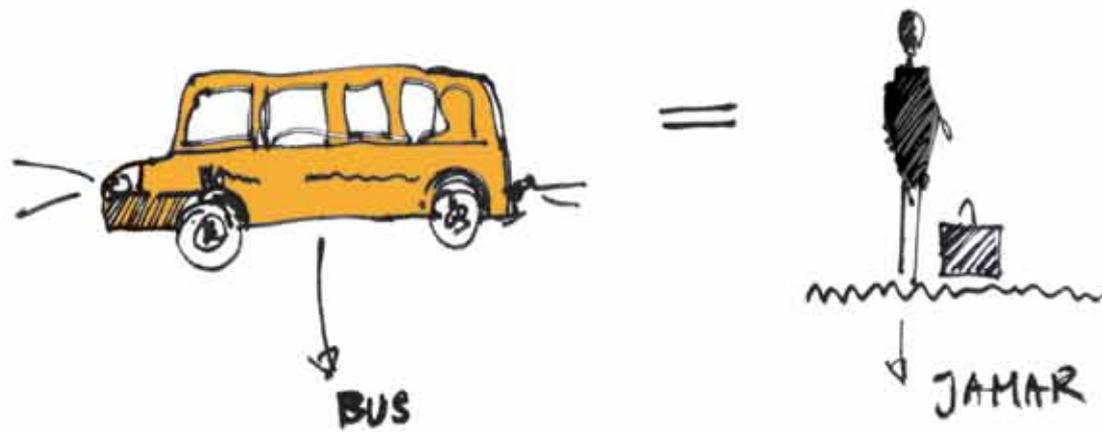


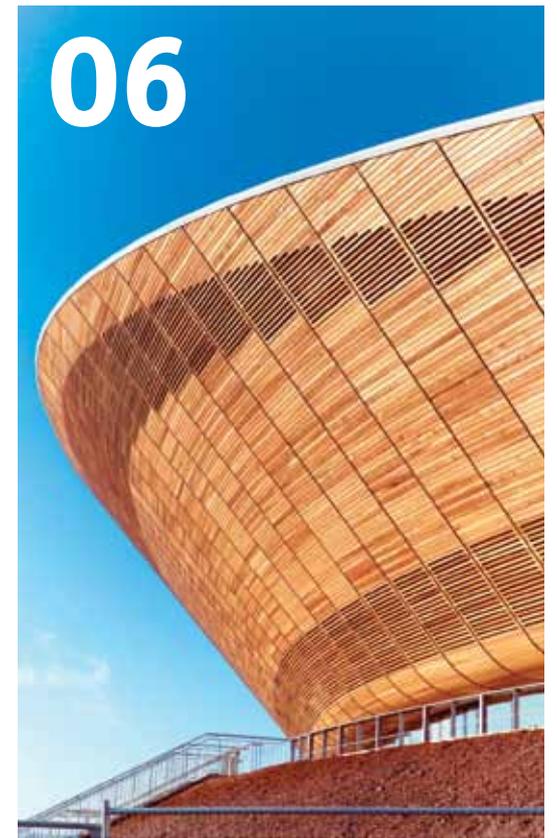
the Architect

ISSUE NO. 56 | JUNE 2011

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KAMRA TAL-PERITI



contents



■ PRACTICE 04

- 4 EDITORIAL
- 5 KTP NEWS
- 6-10 PEOPLE & PROJECTS
- 11 EU DESK

■ FEATURE 12

- 12-13 GERRIT RIETVELD
- 14-15 MEPA REFORM
- 16-17 POLITICIANS & PERITI

■ CURRENT 18

- 18-19 EVENTS
- 20-21 HERITAGE
- 22 ITALO RANIOLO
- 23 PRODUCT NEWS
- 24-25 FUTURE
- 26 WEB + COMPETITION
- 27 INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

the Architect

"Apart from being positive team players, periti are usually well trained in taking up leading roles with greater responsibility within a project team or within an organisation."

Perit Karmenu Vella, page 16

Yes or No?

Possibly the two most used words during recent months while the divorce debate was at its most fervent were “Yes” and “No” (and of course their Maltese equivalents). With both factions doing their best to garner support from all parts, these words were caught up in the mire of the debate, until eventually the “Yes” vote won by a margin which is typical of Maltese electoral processes. Approximately 72% of the population cast their vote in the referendum, and of these nearly 53% voted in favour of the introduction of divorce. Within days of the publication of the results, parliament was hot on its heels to initiate the debate on the relevant legislation lest they be accused of ignoring the electorate’s decision. Where, I hear you asking, am I going with this? What has this got to do with the price of potatoes? Well, hear me out ...

A much less publicised form of consultative process took place earlier this year. In January the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment (MRRRA) issued a call for public consultation on a document dealing with proposed amendments to the *Periti* Act and other legislation that directly affects the day to day practice of *periti*. This document was largely based on recommendations that had been put forward by the *Kamra tal-Periti* as far back as 2007 following consultation with the profession, and which government had, in part, taken on board, while rejecting and omitting other recommendations made by the *Kamra*. In reaction to government’s call, the *Kamra* held an Extraordinary General Meeting which took a stand on each of the proposed amendments. This position was circulated to all *periti* asking for their support or otherwise.

By the closing date of the public consultation period, the *Kamra* had received 350 responses, with a few others trickling in over the following weeks. This number represents 50% of the profession, and of these, all (that is 100%) expressed their support of the *Kamra*’s position. The *Kamra* presented the MRRRA with its official response to the public consultation document, together with the relevant lists showing the support of the profession for such position, at the end of February 2011. Yet, to date, the *Kamra* has not even received so much as a simple acknowledgement, let alone any indication of a sincere commitment to take things forward. Where, therefore, do we stand? It seems that for one’s voice to be heard in this country one must perforce make a fuss in the media, initiate a mudslinging campaign, protest outside the Prime Minister’s office or threaten to strike. Being polite and civilised seems to be a sure recipe for being ignored.

This is even more evident in the ongoing consultation process that the *Kamra* is participating in as part of the much touted MEPA Reform exercise. Week after week, since January, representatives of the *Kamra* have met with representatives from MEPA to put forward com-

ments, suggestions and complaints on the procedural aspects of the Reform – such as those related to MEPA’s electronic applications system, the exaggerated list of submission requirements *periti* are expected to provide even when these are irrelevant to the application at hand, and the *modus operandi* being adopted by the Environment and Planning Commissions and Case Officers in the assessment of applications, to name but a few. Yet, twenty meetings later, together with a nine-page long list of proposals submitted by the *Kamra*, and countless email exchanges, not much has changed. While it is true that the MEPA officials concerned are doing their utmost to address the issues raised by the *Kamra*, it is more than evident that the Authority does not have the resources to address these matters holistically and efficiently.

In a recent interview carried by the Sunday edition of Malta Today, Dr Ian Stafrace, recently appointed MEPA CEO, was quoted as saying that “reforming the Authority is not a matter of simply enacting a law, but an ongoing process. One of the main thrusts of the reform is that the Authority has to render itself flexible enough to be pro-active and reactive. These aspects of the reform cannot occur within a day or two.” While one can understand the rationale behind this statement, and can concede that “a day or two” is indeed wishful thinking, it is inconceivable that, six months down the line since the promulgation of the Reform legislation, matters which, frankly, should have been foreseen and tackled by MEPA well prior to the implementation of the Reform are still cropping up. The discussion at this stage should be on issues of greater import, such as the quality of the planning process and the resultant quality in the built environment, and not focussed on issues such as the basic courtesy of MEPA using the *perit*’s reference for an application in its correspondence (to mention but one of the sore points).

So, is the *Kamra* being relevant in representing the profession? Is it being effective in putting forward the concerns and suggestions of its members? Hand on heart, I have to say that it is doing its best, albeit this may not be achieving the desired results. Whether this is the *Kamra*’s own fault or that of the powers that be, who undoubtedly seem to be more interested in driving forward only those issues that are sure to win them favours with the electorate, is for our readers, the profession and the public to gauge.

The bottom line, however, remains the fact that the weight of a “Yes” or a “No” seems to depend solely on the decibel level of the voice shouting it out and on the levels to which its proponents are prepared to descend in order to achieve their goals.

Simone Vella Lenicker
Editor



THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE
SLIEMA ROAD
GZIRA GZR 06 - MALTA
TEL./FAX. (+356) 2131 4265
EMAIL: info@ktpmalta.com
WEBSITE: www.ktpmalta.com

KAMRA TAL-PERITI

To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2011 consists of Vincent Cassar (President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Vice President and Honorary Secretary) and Council members Ruben Paul Borg, Jacques Borg Barthet, Keith Cole, David Felice, Anthony Fenech Vella, Danica Mifsud, Anton Valentino and Damian Vella Lenicker. The Architect is the official journal of the Kamra Tal-Periti. It is published on a quarterly basis and distributed with the Business Today newspaper. The Architect is not to be sold separately. The contents of this journal are copyright. Reproduction in part or in full is forbidden without the permission of the editor. The opinions expressed by writers of signed articles and letters appearing in the magazine are those of their respective authors, and neither the Kamra Tal-Periti nor MediaToday Co. Ltd is responsible for these opinions or statements.

Editor: **Simone Vella Lenicker**
Design: **Zvezdan Reljic – ZED Creative**
Sales: **Adriana Farrugia** Tel: **21 382 741** ext. **126**
Printed at: **Print It**

Published by:

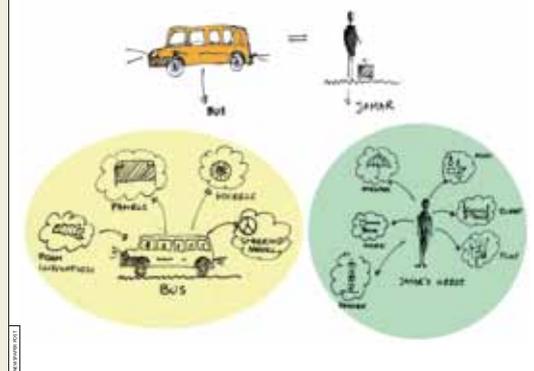


Vjal ir-Rihan, San Gwann SGN 4016, Malta
Tel: +356 21 382 741, Fax: +356 21 381 992
Email: admin@mediatoday.com.mt

the Architect

ISSUE NO. 56 | JUNE 2011

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KAMRA TAL-PERITI



COVER:

Using resources to solve a problem – project as part of “Towards Frugality” workshop by Patty Grech, Violet Kulewska, Amelia Saint George (pages 18-19)

Professional Indemnity Insurance Services

On the 19th May 2011, Elmo Insurance Brokers Ltd together with W.R. Berkley Insurance (Europe) Ltd (WRB Europe) delivered a presentation on professional indemnity insurance services and case studies to an audience of periti. Mr. Nick Cox, Senior Underwriter at WRB Europe introduced his company and its history, with a start-up in the USA in 1967 up to its more recent venture into Europe in 2003. W.R. Berkley



Corporation's shares are traded on the NYSE Fortune 500. S&P have given the company an A+ rating with a stable outlook.

WRB Europe is a UK FSA approved insurer with a value of £145.5 million at December 2010. Classes written by W.R. Berkley include professional indemnity, directors & officers, general liability, medical malpractice, accident & health, engineering & construction, marine (hull, cargo), surety and commercial property & casualty packages. This gives WRB the ability to package up policies together.

With respect to PII cover for the architect-



tural profession, since 2003 WRB Europe have generated €38.7 million in premium income in over fifteen thousand policies. In 2010 alone, 2,282 policies were written for a premium income of €3,679,000. Mr. Cox produced further figures of interest: since 2003, WRB received 2,249 notifications of which 1,399 closed without any payments being incurred, while 382 notifications (or 17% of all notifications) have resulted in some kind of payment being made or incurred. WRB Europe's average claim pay-

ment works out at €48,920 with the largest ever claim having a value of €1,500,000 plus defence costs of €100,000.

The second part of the presentation was devoted to a number of case studies of claims for which the speaker highlighted the rudiments of good practice namely that:

- Periti need to ensure that responsibilities for all aspects of the project should be clearly set out within contract terms and conditions namely job description, roles and responsibilities and fee schedule.
- Periti need to keep up to date on changes in the law.
- Periti need to ensure that their clients can pursue claims directly against all parties involved in construction (i.e. the contractual matrix), and also the importance of ensuring that sub-consultants also carry PII to adequate levels.
- It is important for periti to check their drawings to ensure accuracy at all times, even with regards to the depiction of the neighbouring properties.
- It is important to take the clients' instructions and follow them through.
- Sometimes a negligence claim may arise because an Insured (perit) has decided to pursue a fee claim.
- Obtain written planning approval

At the end of the presentation the audience had the opportunity to field questions about professional indemnity insurance as well as to discuss issues elicited by the case studies.

Seminar for Final Year Students

On the 6th April 2011, the Kamra tal-Periti organised its annual "Ethics and the Perit" seminar for final year students at the Faculty for the Built Environment, University of Malta. The topic was introduced by Perit Saviour Borg who commenced his session with a dialogue with the students encouraging them to put forward their understanding of the term "ethics". This exercise elicited a well thought out response from the students, from which the speaker extracted both a nuanced definition of the term as well as a number of questions. He stated that the practice of architecture

and civil engineering is intrinsically ethical in nature because it is concerned with the future state of the environment, used or adapted to suit human purposes. It is concerned with human well-being, at least those aspects of human well-being that can be addressed through the design of the environment and the provision of professional service generally.

Therefore both architectural and civil engineering practice necessitate inherent ethical consideration because they are about choices made by the practitioner, be they environmental, business (marketing, which projects to undertake, which clients to work with, etc), design (deliberations and critiques of function, aesthetics, concepts), budgets (durability and value for money), client and contractor interactions (honouring contracts, fairness, trust and advice), contracts (equitable conditions, providing value for service fees, mutual respect, and duties), public presentations (who has the right to know and be advised about projects, who has input to design), staff development and recognition etc.

The discussion suggested some interesting questions such as - how do we arrive at justice and fairness in our dealings with others clients, contractors, third parties, colleagues? are our duties to ourselves (and those close to us) different from our duties to others in general? how do we apply ethical considerations in our professional dealings? in the light of the expectation of public service and trust, what are the differences between professional ethics and business ethics?

Perit Borg went on to propose tools to assist students and practitioners in their ethical considerations. Following this, he distributed a case study and asked the students to use the tools and acquired skills to identify and discuss ethical issues intrinsic to the case.

The second session was presented by Perit David Pace who spoke about the perit's responsibility to maintain high standards of professional conduct with everyone, every time, and everywhere.

He pointed out both deeds of commission and deeds of omission in everyday practice, highlighting the importance of good professional conduct in relationships with clients, contractors and periti. In his presentation Perit Pace raised awareness of issues such

as intrusion, denigration and poaching amongst colleagues, relations with clients, information misuse, lack of preparation and/or competence, negligence, overcharging, unacceptable practice, misrepresentation of facts and fraud. He also described responsibilities specific to situations such as the perit as a court expert, the perit as a public official and the perit in employment.

Following each presentation, the students had the opportunity to put questions to the speakers and to discuss how such matters affect everyday practice.

Central Registry Act

The Kamra tal-Periti has participated actively in a series of meetings held to discuss the draft Central Registry Act. Many of the Kamra's proposal are being considered by the team drafting the Act and it is expected that a final draft should soon be available for comments. Anyone interested in assisting the Kamra in this exercise is invited to contact the office on info@ktpmalta.com.

Members' Directory

One of the features on the Kamra's website www.ktpmalta.com is a Members' Directory. A section has recently been added to include also details of partnerships of warrant holders. All members interested in having their details listed on this page are invited to contact the Kamra for further details.

Meeting with new periti

On the 13 June, members of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti met with a group of young periti who recently received their warrant to practice. Short presentations were delivered by Perit Simone Vella Lenicker on the Kamra, its work and the services it provides to periti, by Perit Damian Vella Lenicker who spoke about the current and proposed Code of Professional Conduct, and by Perit Vincent Cassar who invited those present to become full members of the Kamra and to participate in its events and consultations. Over drinks and some snacks, the Council members then continued to discuss with these periti, learning more about the problems they face in their new careers, and hearing about their dreams and plans for the future.



London 2012 Olympic Velodrome

Hopkins Architects win – AJ100

Last May, Sir Michael Hopkins, one of the founding partners of the practice Hopkins Architects, received the prestigious peer award “Contribution to the Profession”, while the practice’s London 2012 Olympic Velodrome scooped the “Building of the Year” award from among a shortlist of eight very impressive projects in the AJ100 awards. This is the second year in a row that Hopkins has claimed the Building of the Year prize. Hopkins Architects also received a commendation in the “Most Sustainable Practice” award category.

Building of the Year, the Olympic Velodrome, is one of the four permanent venues on the Olympic Park and designed for the indoor track cycling events at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The facility was unilaterally agreed upon by judges for the prize due to its “near perfect synthesis of form and function”, as described by jury member Patrik Schumacher of Zaha Hadid Architects. The jury, which also comprised Frank Duffy (DEGW) and Christine Murray (AJ editor), were particularly impressed by the beauty of the cedar cladding, the ingenious light-weight double cable-net roof, the dominance of natural light and the Velodrome’s beauty in section.

Meanwhile, this year’s Contribution to the Profession winner Sir Michael Hopkins CBE



Sir Michael Hopkins

© Elke Meitzel

received the popular vote from among his peers for his significant contribution to UK architecture since he founded the Hopkins practice in 1976. During his career, he has been awarded a CBE and Knighted for Services to Architecture, and also won the



Eduardo Souto de Moura

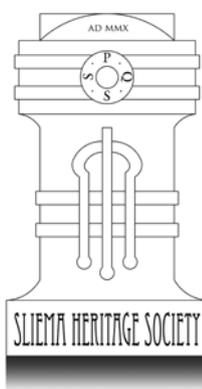
Photo Augusto Brázio

RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture in 1994 (with partner Patricia Hopkins).

Paul Finch, Editorial Director, The Architects’ Journal, said, “Our sincere congratulations to Hopkins Architects, not only for Michael’s much deserved Contribution to the Profession award but also for the impressive achievement of securing the Building of the Year award for the second year on the run. This year’s AJ100 awards is also most definitely Hopkins’ night, and I trust that their friends, peers and colleagues will come together to warmly congratulate them.”

Undertaken by the Architects’ Journal, in collaboration with Imperial College London, the annual AJ 100 survey provides a vivid insight into the performance and success of the architectural sector and its value to the UK economy. The survey is completed by the vast majority of UK practices, who in addition to providing statistics on the number of qualified architects employed also submit information on their commercial performance.

Full details of the AJ 100 rankings are available at www.architectsjournal.co.uk/aj100/. Information and images provided by Financial Dynamics.



Sliema Heritage Society

A new voluntary organisation has been established under the name of Sliema Heritage Society. The primary goal of the society is to promote Sliema's cultural heritage through educational activities. Public lectures will be delivered about matters concerning the town's patrimony particularly its past and present architectural legacies. Tours and exhibitions will also be organised. In time, literature about certain aspects covered by the activities mentioned will also be published. An interesting line-up of lectures for this year is being planned. In February a lecture entitled Perspectives on the Victorian Architectural Heritage of Sliema was delivered by Dr Jacqueline Banerjee, a British expert on Victorianism. Other subjects to be lectured on this year will include fortifications in the Sliema area, lost architectural landmarks of the town as well as a lecture on Sliema's wartime air-raid shelters. The society is working together with other local entities such as the Sliema Local Council and the Sliema Residents Association to fulfil its mission statement.

Anyone interested in becoming a member is invited to contact the Sliema Heritage Society at 2, Don Rua Street, Sliema, SLM1882 or by sending an email to sliema.heritage.society@gmail.com.

Pritzker Prize 2011

Earlier this year, Porto-based architect Eduardo Souto de Moura was named the



1994-2002. House in Serra da Arrábida, Portugal
Photo by Luis Ferreira Alves



1989-94 - House in "Bom Jesus", Braga, Portugal
Photo by Luis Ferreira Alves

2011 Pritzker Prize laureate for his considerable achievements in the field of architecture and the built environment. The selection of Souto de Moura as this year's recipient of the world's most sought-after architectural prize marks a noticeable step away from a developing pattern of so-called 'starchitects'. Over the last few years, the laureates have been internationally recognised figures, both in professional and public circles, such as Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Frank Gehry and Peter Zumthor.

This year's winner, the Portuguese designer Souto de Moura works largely within his native country, although his 2005 Serpentine Pavilion in London's Kensington Gardens with Alvaro Siza (the 1992 Pritzker Prize laureate) was internationally well received. In their selection of Souto de Moura the Pritzker Prize jury panel cited numerous projects of his within Portugal, including the Burgo Office Tower in Porto, the Casa das Histórias Paula Rego, and the Estádio Municipal de Braga.

Lord Palumbo, chairman of the jury, said, "during the past three decades, Eduardo Souto de Moura has produced a body of work that is of our time but also carries echoes of architectural traditions. His buildings have a unique ability to convey seemingly conflicting characteristics – power and modesty, bravado and subtlety, bold public authority and a sense of intimacy – at the same time." Over the years, 58-year-old Souto de Moura has completed more than 60 buildings in a variety of sectors from commercial to leisure, entertainment to public art, in a choice selection of European countries. The citation from the jury states that "Souto de Moura is an architect fascinated by the beauty and authenticity of materials. His knowledge of construction and skill with materials are always visible in his buildings. He has the confidence to use stone that is a thousand years old or to take inspiration from a mod-

ern detail by Mies van der Rohe ... Eduardo Souto de Moura's architecture it is not obvious, frivolous, or picturesque. It is imbued with intelligence and seriousness. His work requires an intense encounter not a quick glance. And like poetry, it is able to communicate emotionally to those who take the time to listen. His buildings have a unique ability to convey seemingly conflicting characteristics—power and modesty, bravado and subtlety, bold public authority and sense of intimacy—at the same time. For architecture that appears effortless, serene, and simple, and for the care and poetry that permeates each project, Eduardo Souto de Moura receives the 2011 Pritzker Architecture Prize."

Further information may be found at www.pritzkerprize.com.

New Management Team at MEPA

The recent appointments of Dr. Ian Stafrace, as the new CEO, Dr. Petra Bianchi as Director for Environment Protection and Perit Alexander Borg as Director of Enforcement, together with Perit Christopher Borg, Director of Planning and Ing. Ray Piscopo, Director for

ment team, will develop the necessary strategies to ensure that the Authority meets its objectives and targets as outlined through the MEPA Reform. I believe that with this new management team, our operations will certainly become more effective and in line with the key principles of consistency, efficiency, accountability and enforcement, on which the MEPA Reform has been based."

These new appointments come in the wake of the much touted MEPA Reform which is still in its infancy and which still needs to be evaluated and discussed. Newly appointed CEO Dr. Ian Stafrace commented in an interview with "Outlook", the Authority's newsletter, that "the moment we think that we have 'completed the reform', then that's the moment we will fail in our bid to ensure that MEPA is an efficient, transparent, effective Authority that is accountable for its action ... As a team, all of us within the Authority must understand that the reform is an ongoing process. It is not a start and end project, rather, it is a continuous effort to ensure flexibility and the ability to adapt to meet the needs of the industries and the individuals that we provide a service to without compromising our principles of sustainability."

While congratulating the new appointees and



Left to right: Perit Alexander Borg, Perit Christopher Borg, Dr Ian Stafrace, Mr Austin Walker, Dr Petra Bianchi, Ing. Ray Piscopo

Corporate Services, under the leadership of MEPA Chairman Mr Austin Walker, has completed the entire process of putting together a dynamic, new management team to lead the Authority.

MEPA Chairman Mr Austin Walker said "the MEPA Board, together with the new manage-

auguring them a fruitful experience in their work with the Authority, the Kamra tal-Periti will continue to maintain an active role in the evaluation and discussion on the MEPA Reform, and to work closely with the Management Team to ensure that the planning process runs as smoothly as possible.

European Business Awards 2011

Since 2007, the European Business Awards have recognised innovative businesses on the continent by promoting excellence, best practice and innovation in the European business community. A number of firms are shortlisted from entries in the



European Business Awards™

SPONSORED BY



HSBC
The world's local bank

participating countries and such firms then compete on a European level in ten categories, including the Award for Customer Focus and the UKTI Award for Innovation. Two of the fifteen organisations shortlisted from among the Maltese entries are in fact architectural firms, namely Architecture Project and DeMicoli and Associates.

HSBC is the head sponsor of the European Business Awards, together with co-sponsors RSM International, Infosys and in association with UKTI, is an independent Awards programme designed to recognise and promote excellence, best practice and innovation in the European business community, in line with the broad aims of the European Union and business representative groups across the member states.

Adrian Tripp, CEO of the European Business Awards says, "every year we receive hundreds of entries from businesses who are passionate about their role in driving the economy of the nation they reside in ... For European businesses to thrive and stay at the forefront of economic growth it is vital that we invest in enterprise, innovation and excellence."

The overall category winners will be selected and announced at a gala ceremony next November in Barcelona. Further information on the awards may be found at www.businessawardseurope.com.

Mies van der Rohe Award 2011

The Neues Museum in Berlin is the winner of the 2011 European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award. The building is a reconstruction, blending old and new, by UK architect Sir David Chipperfield. The original Neues Museum, designed by Friedrich August Stüler, was built in the mid-19th century. The building was severely damaged in the Second World War and reconstruction began in 2003, with the aim of restoring the site to its former glory. David Chipperfield, who worked on the project in collaboration with fellow British architect Julian Harrap, adopted a dynamic approach in its restoration. Rather than attempting to conceal the difference between the old and new elements, the past and present are beautifully combined to create an unforgettable building with multiple layers.

David Chipperfield, Principal of David Chipperfield Architects, said, "the reconstruction of the Neues Museum is a testament to the collaborative process undertaken in a demanding climate of public opinion. The result is evidence not only of the efforts of the professional team but of the commitment of the client and the city authorities to engage in this rigorous and



Neues Museum

Photo by Ute Zscharnt for David Chipperfield Architects

articulated process."

The winners were chosen from 343 submitted works in 33 European countries which included one project from Malta, namely the Joinwell showroom designed by DeMicoli and Associates. Six works were shortlisted for the main award. The other finalists were: Bronks Youth Theatre (Brussels, Belgium, designed by Martine De Maeseener, Dirk Van den Brande); MAXXI: Museum of XXI Century Arts (Rome, Italy, by Zaha Hadid, Patrick Schumacher, Gianluca Racana); Concert House Danish Radio (Copenhagen, Denmark, by Jean Nouvel); Acropolis Museum (Athens, Greece, by Bernard Tschumi) and

Rehabilitation Centre Groot Klimmendaal (Arnhem, The Netherlands, by Koen van Velsen).

The Fundació Mies van der Rohe was set up in 1983 by the Barcelona City Hall with the initial purpose of reconstructing the German Pavilion, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. In addition to preserving and managing the Pavilion, the Foundation also focuses on: promoting debate about contemporary architecture and urbanism; building a documentary archive about Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as well as modern and contemporary architecture; and organising correlated awards, courses, lectures, exhibitions, publications and studies. Further information on the award and participating projects may be found at www.miesarch.com.

Blue Award for sustainable architecture – International competition for students

The Department for Spatial and Sustainable Design of the Vienna University of Technology in Austria recently announced the launch of the second edition of the 'Blue Award'. This biennial international competition, open to students of architecture, regional planning and urbanism highlights future-oriented sustainable solutions in the three following categories:

- *Urban and landscape development and transformation*
- *Ecological building*
- *Building in existing structures*

The competition is organised with the support of the International Union of Architects, and has a total prize fund of €20,000 which will be shared by the winners selected by the jury amongst the three categories. The first Blue Award was held in 2009. 163 projects from 86



faculties and architecture schools spread across 49 countries were submitted. The aim of this contest is to promote the subject of sustainability, to introduce it in the education of future architects, regional planners and urbanists, and to support the efforts of teachers and students in this field. Further information including timelines and submission requirements may be found at www.blueaward.at.

IMAGINE 18

Imagine 18 aimed to show the capacity and willingness of the public to get down to business in shaping the vision of Valletta as a candidate for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC), 2018. The event was organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, a new entity set up to devise and implement the vision and strategy of the ECOC bid. The public and key cultural stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of workshops based on eight core themes ranging from youth perspectives on ECOC to those of 'community' and 'identity,' and the possibilities opened up by innovation, science and technology for the cultural sphere and our use of public spaces.

Participants indicated their appreciation of the event not only as an opportunity to have their voice in creating the vision for Valletta 2018 as a ECOC, but also as one of the few occasions for people from across the arts, science and community sectors to come together and share ideas. The event was conceived as a brainstorming exercise to guide Valletta's preliminary bid as a ECOC which has to be lodged with the European Commission by mid October. Each year, the European Commission designates two cities as European Capitals of Culture. Valletta, which includes all Malta and Gozo in its bid, along with one city among several competing for the title in the Netherlands, has been earmarked to run for ECOC in 2018.

Karsten Xuereb, Valletta 2018 Project Coordinator, said that Imagine 18 had shown that the ECOC process could act as a powerful stimulus to those already engaged in the cultural sphere, but importantly, it could also provide a voice to those who wish to see Valletta 2018 as the catalyst to explore totally new creative directions. "Imagine 18 had the hard job of asking people from a range of backgrounds and ages to think 'vision', an abstract concept, and not begin to draft





'Imagine 18' workshop

actual programmes of the ECoC year. We've seen some surprising and esoteric angles come to the fore today. None are thought of as beyond belief at this point, as we are at the start of the 2018 visioning process. We've had, at one extreme, the science workshop imagine an ECoC without participants, calling on us to use virtual technologies. On the other hand, we've had young people, a group of school students, talk to us, surprisingly perhaps, of the role of family, one of Malta's most traditional aspects, as something to celebrate in our ECoC. They also voiced the need for educational structures and curricula to allow them to be more creative, explore, experiment, fail and learn."

Several key themes were highlighted by all working groups. These included the notion of Malta's traditional heritage and cultural assets being updated and made relevant to contemporary society; a fusion of past and present in cultural activities. Another was the need to see the ECoC process as a chance to discuss Malta's identity and celebrate its roots as a country at the fringe of Europe – the southernmost point of the European Union – but also at the heart of a rich, cultural area – the Mediterranean Sea. The workshop discussing community issues stressed that many people in Malta could trace their own family history to migrant influxes to Malta over the centuries and therefore urged the ECoC vision to include the cultural legacy of all migrants, past and present.

Participants concluded that the ECoC process, from today to well beyond 2018, had to have meaning for 'the man in the street',

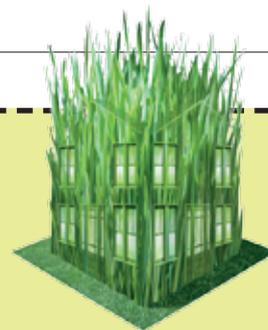
across the islands, if it is to succeed. Valletta 2018 is not about high-brow or low-brow culture, but about pushing the boundaries of the country's current perceptions of what culture is and for whom, and raising its profile, professionalism and potential to benefit all citizens culturally, socially and economically.

The founders of the Valletta 2018 Foundation are the Valletta Local Council and the Association for Local Councils with other governing members; the University of Malta; Malta Council for Culture and the Arts; the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry; and the Inter-Ministerial Commission for the European Capital of Culture.

CIWEM

After receiving 91 expressions of interest, CIWEM (Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management) has appointed five new Trustees to its governing body. The Institution has appointed Bushra Hussain, Rafid Alkhaddar, Kevin Gatt, Terry Fuller and Mike Summersgill to CIWEM's Trustee Board. They join the current Trustees Jim Oatridge, Gerard Morris, David Wilkes, Paul Hillman, Peter Matthews, Steve Smith, Robin Lowndes, Trevor Harrington, Chris Boshier, Katherine Bradshaw, Nigel Hendley and Norman Lowe. The appointments reflect CIWEM's international position, with members in nearly 100 countries.

Kevin Gatt, an architect, civil engineer and a management consultant, is a visiting senior



SUSTAINABILITY SNAPS KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE JARGON AND WHAT'S GOING ON

The European Commission has recently adopted a Roadmap for transforming the European Union into a competitive low carbon economy by 2050. The Roadmap describes the cost-effective pathway to reach the EU's objective of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% of 1990 levels by 2050. The Commission's detailed analysis of cost-effective ways of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 has produced a number of findings – it indicates that a 40% domestic reduction of GHG compared to 1990 as a milestone for 2030, and 80% for 2050 is required to achieve the targets. Building on what has already been achieved, the EU needs to start working now on appropriate strate-

gies to move in this direction, and all Member States should soon develop national low carbon roadmaps if not already done. The Commission is prepared to provide some of the necessary tools and policies. The analysis also shows that with existing policies, the EU will achieve the goal of a 20% GHG reduction domestically by 2020. As well as reducing the threat of dangerous climate change, deep reductions in the EU's emissions have the potential to deliver benefits in the form of savings on fossil fuel imports and improvements in air quality and public health.

Source: MEUSAC

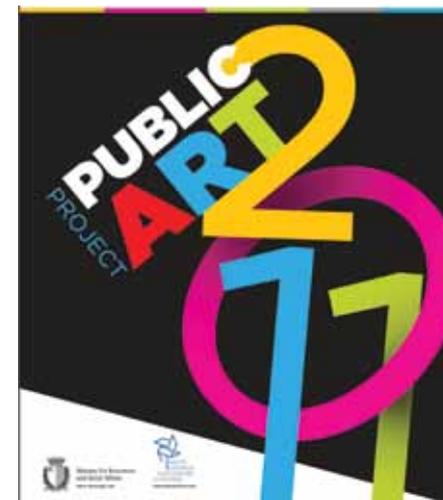
lecturer at the University of Malta with a special interest in sustainable development and climate change. Bushra Hussain works in Dubai as project manager at COWI and is currently managing the creation of an artificial eco-island in Abu Dhabi as part of the Emirate's Environmental Framework for its 'Capital 2030' initiative. Rafid Alkhaddar is professor of water and environmental engineering at Liverpool John Moores University, as well as a visiting professor to universities in Turkey, Egypt and Iraq. Rafid has been involved with CIWEM for over 15 years, including as a professional reviewer for new members, a panel member and chair for the Northwest and North Wales branch. Chair of CIWEM's Rivers & Coastal Group in 2009/10, Terry Fuller is director of operations at Jacobs Engineering and has over 23 years of experience working within the river and coastal environments. CIWEM Fellow, Mike Summersgill, is a partner at SEnSe Associates LLP, specialising in geotechnical and environmental engineering for landfills and brownfield developments. Mike is registered as a SiLC (Specialist in Land Condition) and also acts voluntarily as an Eco-Schools Assessor in Kent.

CIWEM's executive director, Nick Reeves, said, "The addition of these new Trustees to the Board shows CIWEM's genuine commitment to tackling global environmental issues. The incredible variety and depth of knowledge that our new Trustees bring to the institution will help us meet the need for strong leader-

ship in water and environmental affairs." CIWEM members will be invited to ratify the appointment of these new Trustees at the AGM on 29 September 2011. For further information about CIWEM visit: www.ciwem.org.

Public Art Project 2011

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA) recently launched a call for Public Art Commissions to give a challenging opportunity to established and emerging artists, to create artistic installations which will evoke a positive visual experience in the general public and enhance the



different locations in which they are to be placed. The MRRA and MCCA recognise the importance of commissioning art for the public realm as an important stimulus, not only for artists, but more significantly, for the community at large.

This programme of commissions will aim to:

- Establish a distinct and vibrant, visually rich environment in public places by creating new spaces and regenerating old ones
- Create a visual and aesthetic legacy
- Foster and promote contemporary artistic heritage by increasing awareness of innovative artistic work
- Stimulate the growth of a culturally informed public
- Make the arts more widely accessible whilst developing new audiences
- Assist innovation and creativity by investing in artists
- Provide platforms for artists to showcase their work
- Encourage civic pride

Submissions are to be made by the 29 July 2011, and all details regarding participation are available on www.mrra.gov.mt and www.maltaculture.com.

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AWARD 2011

The *Din l-Art Helwa* Award for Architectural Heritage for 2011 is now open for entries. The Award has been designed to encourage better architecture by rewarding any building project which made an outstanding and significant contribution to architectural excellence in a Maltese context and that the



The Lombard Bank Annexe was awarded the Prix d'Honneur in its category and the overall Silver Medal in the 2010 edition of the Award

project sends out a clear message that old buildings can be successfully restored and converted to modern use whilst retaining their character and intrinsic value.

Eligible projects include the restoration or

conservation of buildings, the adaptation of buildings to new uses, building additions or alterations, or new building projects in conservation areas. The projects can relate either to a single building, a complex of buildings, or a historic urban environment or townscape. The projects will be judged on the quality of the work executed, their historic, cultural, educational and social relevance, the preliminary research conducted and their aesthetic and visual merit. The projects may be on a scale ranging from small to large, and should display a standard of work which would be outstanding in a Maltese context.

The *Din l-Art Helwa* Award for Architectural Heritage has now established itself as a worthy and prestigious annual event which brings well-merited recognition not only to the periti rewarded, but also to their parent firms and the architectural profession more widely. *Din l-Art Helwa* states that in the course of the last few years there has been a most encouraging increase in conservation and restoration of old buildings and monuments in Malta, both in the private and the public sector. The heritage organisation therefore feels that these greatly deserve encouragement and public recognition. Submissions for the *Din l-Art Helwa* Architectural Heritage Award Scheme is open for projects completed in the last year up to the 31 August, 2011, and submissions must be received at the *Din l-Art Helwa* office by the 30th September. More information about the Award Application and Registration forms are available from the *Kamra tal-Periti* or from *Din l-Art Helwa*.

Forgotten Spaces 2011

There were 138 entries for Forgotten Spaces London from which the judging panel selected a shortlist of 28 schemes. The shortlist includes a range of innovative, far reaching and practical ideas of how to put to use overlooked or forgotten sites in London. Highlights include proposals for festival firepits in Crystal Palace, artist-inhabited church spires across the City, climbing tunnels in Clapham and event spaces for Bethnal Green tower blocks.

The London judging panel included: Jeremy Titchen, Development Director of Qatari Diar, Paul Finch, Editorial Director, Architects' Journal, Tony Heaton, Chief Executive, Shape Arts, Neil Taylor, Head of Commercial Markets, Ordnance Survey and Julia Barfield, Marks Barfield Architects, Tamsie Thomson, Director of RIBA London and Mark Brearley of Design for London. London judge Julia Barfield said: 'The range of proposals was particularly impressive and it is clear from the great ideas we saw that people had really had a lot of fun with it. The shortlist is a great provocation for everyone to think about the use of space in their local area. The challenge now is to try and realise at least one.'

Open to entrants across the UK, the competition invited architects, artists, engineers, planners and landscape designers to nominate sites in the Greater London area and put forward proposals for its improvement. Three top prizes and up to five commendations will be awarded to the best schemes and a shortlist of up to 25 of the best proposals which will be exhibited in a public exhibition at Somerset House, London in Autumn 2011.

Letters to the Editor

Bridging Malta and Gozo

Dear Editor,

First of all well done for the well presented and informative periodical. In following with interest the suggestions for some projects to be studied and possibly implemented to connect Malta to Gozo, as far as I am aware no one has come forth with the idea of a land-bridge. Such a project would increase our island's coastline exponentially thus making available prime seafront plots to help finance the project. A land-bridge would also offer the possibility of utilising it instead of the

decreasing landfills for the waste generated from construction. One huge advantage of a land-bridge over an excavated tunnel would be that it would take in rubble discarded elsewhere and not itself generate it from the excavations needed to dig into the earth as the mooted tunnel! Another advantage of a land-bridge would be that the increased seafront would prove a haven for marine eco systems.

This is a mere letter and not an in-depth study, but I am sure that such an infrastructure project could propel not only the construction industry but our whole economy on a positive trajec-

tory of sustained growth. As regards financing I am sure not only those residing on the Maltese islands but also Maltese and Gozitans of the diaspora be they in the US, Canada, Australia or elsewhere, besides possibly large and small pension and insurance funds in other jurisdictions might be enticed to invest in long term development bonds

of say 10, 20 and even 30 years at a time when much less worthy projects are being financed by junk bonds because of the dearth of suitable investment opportunities because of so much instability in so many regions, markets and countries.

G. Bonett, Marsalforn

Your letters

Letters from our readers to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 57 are to reach us by the 31st August 2011. Please write to: **The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 1633**, or send an email to thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. All contributions will be acknowledged.

EUROCITIES



EUROCITIES is a network of major European cities which brings together the local governments of more than 140 large cities in over 30 European countries. Its mission statement is to influence and work with the EU institutions to respond to common issues that impact the day-to-day lives of Europeans, as well as to shape the opinions of stakeholders in Brussels to ultimately shift legislation in a way that helps city governments address the EU's strategic challenges at the local level. A large part of its work is aimed at reinforcing the role and place that local government should have in a multi-level governance structure. Currently no Maltese localities are members of this organisation.

Based on the EU's three key challenges, EURO CITIES' policy priorities are:

CLIMATE:

Fighting climate change is one of the top priorities of EURO CITIES in the coming years. As the network of major European cities it has teamed up with other city networks in the 'Local Government Climate Roadmap' which lines out how these networks jointly push for an ambitious post 2012 global climate agreement and for recognition of cities' efforts in climate change mitigation. EURO CITIES also plays an active role in several European initiatives like the Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign, Covenant of Mayors, COMMERCE, the European Mobility Week EPOMM-PLUS, CIVITAS Catalist and CIVITAS Guard. Moreover, driven by members' ambition EURO CITIES set up a Declaration on Climate Change and steers the Green Digital Charter.

RECOVERY:

In 2008 the deepest recession for generations hit the European Union. With its beginnings in the financial sector, the recession eventually affected all elements of society. Cities have borne the worst of the impacts, for example, suffering high levels of unemployment, or lower business survival rates. Yet it is cities that are at the heart of the recovery. It is the cities that are providing vital services and assistance such as business support or housing advice. As we move to economic recovery it is cities again that are key to the EU's future, providing, for example, guidance, funding, infrastructure to support an array of actions that will underpin prosperity.

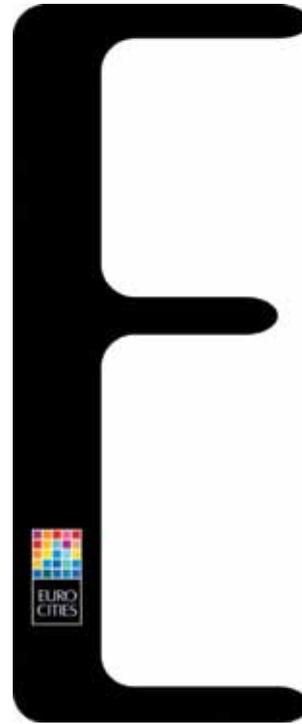
INCLUSION:

Inclusive Cities for Europe is a partnership between the European Commission and EURO CITIES. Funded by PROGRESS (the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), this initiative works in two ways. First, it furthers the participation of cities in the Social Open Method of Coordination (Social OMC) by enhancing their knowledge of the European Social Agenda. Secondly, it generates awareness among national governments of the role of cities in strengthening social inclusion.

EUROCITIES provides a platform for its member cities to share knowledge and ideas, to exchange experiences, to analyse common problems and develop innovative solutions, through a wide range of forums, working groups, projects, activities and events.

Recently, EURO CITIES responded to a stakeholder consultation on the European Commission's new Smart Cities and Communities initiative launched on 21 June in Brussels. This new campaign is intended to support cities and regions in setting up ambitious, large-scale actions that combine technical change with economic and organisational innovation and increase energy efficiency across all dimensions of urban life. EURO CITIES stressed the need for the Smart Cities and Communities initiative to:

- maintain a focus on large urban areas, where the results of strategic investments can be greater, quicker and more visible;
- build strongly on the input received through the announced Smart Cities stakeholder platform;
- support the deployment of state-of-the-art green and smart technologies, strongly focusing on the demand-side management of energy production and consumption;



- select pioneering cities to be funded on a flexible basis, taking different climate regions and levels of economic and sustainable development, population size and governance structures into account;

- offer flexible funding arrangements and explore new ways of financial assistance and engineering.

About three quarters of the population in the EU live in or around cities. Such urban areas consume 70% of the energy in the EU and emit about the same share of greenhouse gases. Cities that pilot the switch to a smart, low-carbon energy system have a huge potential to harvest multiple benefits: saving money thanks to lower energy consumption, boosting employment due to development and roll out of innovative energy technologies, stimulating entrepreneurship through new business opportunities, cleaner air and higher quality of life. The innovative integration of different technologies that make cities and communities "smart"

require the commitment and close collaboration of local authorities, citizens, industry (e.g. energy, construction, transport, ICT), financial institutions, and academia. Thus the aims of the 21 June conference were to:

- officially launch the Smart Cities and Communities Initiative;
- learn about the results of public consultation on the Smart Cities and Communities Initiative and how the forthcoming Smart Cities and Communities Stakeholder Forum will facilitate city partnering, the creation of business opportunities and the replication of successful smart solutions;
- learn from examples in avant-garde cities and communities;
- get an overview of the different European instruments and activities relevant to the Smart Cities and Communities Initiatives;
- form partnerships for the forthcoming Smart Cities and Communities Call.

EUROCITIES also recently published the Green Digital Charter. Today, cities across Europe are responsible for a main share of emissions, but they are also well-placed to deliver innovative solutions. They can pilot new technologies at critical scale, but also provide for regulatory frameworks, set up new types of Public Private Partnerships with business, industry and civil society or lead as example in reducing their own administration's carbon footprint through the use of ICT. The EURO CITIES Green Digital Charter creates a framework for cities to use ICT as a main driver to improve energy efficiency. The Charter is a joint effort of EURO CITIES, the City of Manchester and Clicks and Links Ltd. It was launched at the EURO CITIES annual conference in November 2009.

The Charter commits cities to reducing emissions through Information and Communications Technologies (ICT); therefore promoting progress in tackling climate change through the innovative use of digital technologies in cities. The Charter includes proposals for action on emissions from ICT itself, but more significantly on the restructuring role that ICT can play in enabling greater energy efficiency and, as a result, greater low carbon activity. Furthermore, the Charter entails three pledges in this regard for cities to sign up to:

- Creating a partnership of cities on ICT & Energy Efficiency until the end of 2011;
- Deploying five large-scale pilots per city before 2015;
- Decreasing ICT's direct carbon footprint per city by 30% by 2020.

"Europe's climate targets will only be met through measures that help city governments to manage down their carbon footprint. The Green Digital Charter aims to be a catalyst for cities to work together to find creative and imaginative ways to become smart cities." - Francisco de la Torre Prado, Mayor of Malaga

For further information on EURO CITIES and its initiatives visit www.eurocities.eu.



RIETVELD'S UNIVERSE

architecture, art and design

REVIEW OF AN EXHIBITION AT THE MAXXI, ROME, 14 APRIL – 10 JULY 2011

by Perit Dr Conrad Thake



Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964)

MAXXI, the National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome and designed by Zaha Hadid is celebrating its first anniversary from its official inauguration on 30 May 2010. MAXXI's first year expressed in numbers is impressive – 479,628 visitors in total; 110,000 participating in the events hosted or produced by the museum; an average of 1,547 visitors per day; over €2.6 million in annual tickets; and an average of €14 spent per visitor (a figure comparable with that of the Metropolitan Museum in New York).

During its first year, the MAXXI has organised several high-profile exhibitions with the more recent ones featuring the Italian modernist architects Luigi Moretti and Pier Luigi Nervi. Last April, in conjunction with the Central Museum of Utrecht and NAI Rotterdam, it inaugurated a retrospective exhibition of the Dutch architect and designer Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964). To most architects, Rietveld's fame is attributed to his iconic Red Blue chair and even more so, the Schröder House, built in Utrecht in 1924 and since 2000 inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. It was his first architectural work in brick and wood that appears to be a three dimensional interpretation of a Mondrian painting.

The quality of these two designs is undisputable but what is their significance with regards to mod-



Schroeder House Axonometric Drawing

ernism? Is it true, as the architectural historian and theorist Reyner Banham suggested in 1975, that Rietveld "was very competent, but little more than a provincial figure, of little significance"? Is it a case that the expressive strength of his work has been undervalued and that he is still a relevant source of inspiration for contemporary design?

Rietveld was a highly versatile and prolific artist operating in a wide variety of disciplines. He was an architect, craftsman and woodworker, interior and furniture designer but equally proficient as a teacher, designer of exhibi-

tions and a pioneer of modern design. The exhibition features over 100 works of architecture and design for a total of around 400 items that include drawings, photos and models providing a comprehensive overview of the Dutch master's work: from his relationships with the artists of the De Stijl movement (its main exponents being Theo Van Doesburg, Bart Van der Leck, J.J.P. Oud) and the main protagonists of the Modernist avant-garde – Le Corbusier, Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Among the works displayed are a number of iconic Rietveld



MAXXI, the National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome

PHOTO SIMONE CECCHETTI COURTESY FONDAZIONE MAXXI



BIRZA chair

classics; a model of the Schröder House, the Red-Blue and Zig-Zag chairs, and the Dutch pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1953-54. "In Rietveld's work", states Margherita Guccione, director of MAXXI architecture, "we find many of the themes of modernity, that anticipate, the developments of the most up-to-date architecture and design. In reviewing the work of the Dutch master and his contacts with the avant-gardes of the 20th century, the exhibition examines Rietveld's heritage found in contemporary creativity and the con-

tinuity of the culture of the past century in the most innovative research of the present."

The exhibits take the form of original drawings, contemporary and original photos, prototypes of furniture and design objects, architectural models, books and magazines, posters and advertisements, archive documents and films. The exhibition is organised in four clusters according to chronological order and five specific focuses, these last being devoted in particular to Rietveld the designer. The clusters are as follows:

An idea of a space / 1917-1925 investigates Rietveld's experiments with architecture and space, beginning with the abstract interiors with a Neoplastic configuration linked to the De Stijl movement through to a search for an open, fluid and sensitive space of which the Schröder House represents the most recognisable icon.

Architecture and Modernity / 1925-1945 presents the development of ideas regarding habitation, studying the model homes for lower income classes.

City and urban design / 1933-1950 analyses the experiments in collective planning, the search for a harmonious relationship between urban spaces and social programmes, between environment and new collective attitudes as in the designs for holiday homes.

Living, Working, Exhibiting / 1950-1964 are the themes of Rietveld's most mature research among which two projects of note which were realised in Italy: the Dutch Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and the exhibition on the De Stijl movement at the National Gallery of Modern Art in 1960.

The Focuses are in-depth features dedicated to specific themes. These are devoted to the **Schröder House, Children's furniture** (Rietveld was one of the first designers to create furniture and objects specifically made for children such as the high-chair from 1918), **Foldability** (his studies of the flexible nature of materials – metal, wood, polyester leading to the Birza chair, the First Model in aluminium and the Danish Chair), **Assembling** (with



ZIG ZAG chair



RED and BLUE chair

the Crate series from the 1934 Rietveld invented self-assembly flat-pack furniture) and the **Icons** highlighting the Rietveld classics including the Red-Blue and the Zig-Zag chairs in their diverse versions and reinterpretations.

What clearly emerges from this exhibition is the main thematic of constant experimentation. This was in fact the key to the work of this designer, far more so than that of adhering to a certain formal idiom, the use of a specific material or precise programmatic points. As Edwin Jacobs, Director of the Centraal Museum Utrecht stated "Rietveld's oeuvre is incredibly rich: rich in exceptional ideas, rich in unconventional solutions, rich in memorable fiascos, rich in poetic buildings and uncompro-

mising furniture. The "Rietveld's Universe" project has attempted to contextualise Rietveld's work within his own time while constructing a link with the future.

An artist, whatever his field of action, intuitively seeks to capture the complexity of reality and render it comprehensible. Rietveld was both a pioneer and a model in all the fields in which he worked. As the eminent Italian architect Gae Aulenti stated "Rietveld has a very strong analytical ability. Something that in the chairs is blindingly obvious as he manages to create form through the most microscopic pieces. However, it's in the re-composition of these elements that he reveals a great freedom. And this freedom is, I believe his "craft genius".



PHOTO: F. PANZINI

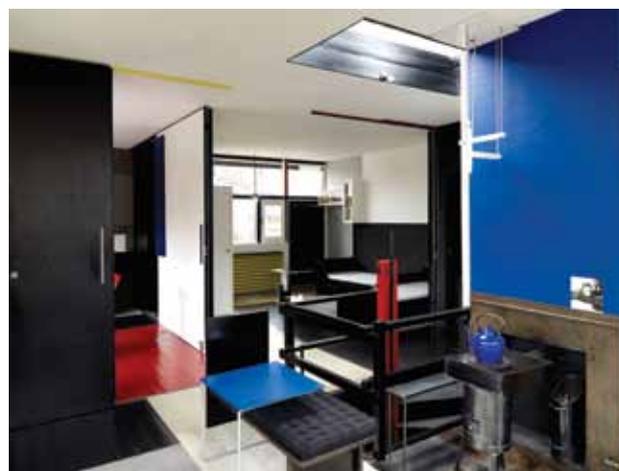


PHOTO: HANS WILSHUT



Furniture for children

Root canal tre

BY PERIT SIMONE VELLA LENICKER

The May issue of Outlook, the monthly newsletter of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), carried an item titled "MEPA Reform – A root canal treatment." This article addressed the changes that have taken place since the introduction of the new Environment and Planning Commissions (EPCs) – but what struck me most was not so much the content of the article as its title. Root canal treatment? I am no dentist, but this terminology is generally used to indicate the elimination of an infection. It is therefore particularly worrying that MEPA compares the recent reform process to this type of intervention. What do they mean by it? Hopefully, the writer intended to make reference to another aspect of such a procedure, namely the treatment of the deepest rooted parts of the (tooth) structure to strengthen and maintain a healthier organisation. But is this so? Is this what the reform aims to address, and has it been successful?

At the end of April, the *Kamra tal-Periti* organised a debate at the Chamber of Commerce in Valletta precisely to discuss the MEPA reform. Nearly two years since government's announcement of the 'Blueprint for MEPA Reform' and four months (at the time of the debate - now close to six months) since the promulgation of the new legislative regime, what has the MEPA reform achieved, where is it lacking and where is it heading?

Ms Vanessa Macdonald kindly accepted the *Kamra's* invitation to chair the debate, which had as its main participants the Hon. Dr Mario de Marco, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, the Environment and Culture, Mr Austin Walker, MEPA Chairman, and Dr Ian Stafrace, the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer for MEPA.

The author gave a short introduction to the debate, pointing out that representatives of the *Kamra*, namely Periti Vincent Cassar, Anthony Fenech Vella, Victor Torpiano and the author, had been meeting representatives of MEPA on a regular weekly basis since last January to discuss



and iron out the problems and issues that cropped up following the promulgation of the Environment and Development Planning Act, Chapter 504 of the Laws of Malta, and related procedures. Taking this as her cue, Ms Macdonald immediately turned her attention to the MEPA Chairman and asked him why so many meetings were necessary and why these issues had not been tackled prior to the implementation of the reform. Austin Walker stated that it would have only been wishful thinking to expect that the reform would have been smooth running, with no teething problems, and that it involved a culture change from all parties – *periti*, MEPA itself and applicants. He went on to say that MEPA will continue to remain open to listen to the *Kamra's* comments and those of individual *periti* and other users, even if these may indicate some signs of weakness in the system, and affirmed that his organisation remains committed to address these issues. The reform, he commented, is not over and there will always be room for improvement.

Turning to the issue of interpretation of policy by Case Officers, Vanessa Macdonald addressed her next question to the CEO – are

Case Officers taking objective or subjective decisions? What is their role in the planning process? Dr Ian Stafrace confirmed that the role of the Case Officer has not changed. However there were two approaches that could be adopted – strict interpretation of policy or the application of common sense. Unfortunately the choice of approach today rests entirely upon the individual. However, Dr Stafrace spoke of his vision to reach a point where the Development Planning Application Reports (DPARs) prepared by Case Officers would constitute a balanced view of both the positive and negative technical assessments of a project, combined with the subjective assessment of its pros and cons. Hopefully, this would result in reports which would not necessarily present a finite recommendation but a truly objective evaluation which would enable the relevant Boards to take more informed decisions.

The reform process appears to be mainly one of changes to procedures, introduction of time lines and a general effort at streamlining the application process. What, however, has happened to the *Kamra's* emphasis on the need for a better quality of the built environment as outlined in its position paper "The Urban Challenge"? How, asked Macdonald of Dr de Marco, is the MEPA reform addressing this? Admittedly, the Parliamentary Secretary stated, there certainly is the need for improvement to our urban settings, and referred to examples such as the "ugliness of Bugibba" as a typical area for possible regeneration and redevelopment. Policies need to be questioned and improved, fiscal incentives need to be introduced to assist owners of scheduled and other historical buildings in their maintenance, the maximisation of development to the detriment of quality needs to be curtailed – these and other measures need to be explored in order for MEPA to be able to truly achieve the objectives outlined in the *Kamra's* position paper.

However, de Marco continued, MEPA cannot accomplish this on its own – *periti* also

have a role to play. While admitting that regulations and policies may curb the *periti's* creativity and innovation, he referred to the *Kamra's* proposal for the introduction of Design Review Panels which are intended to serve as a forum for debate on the architectural, urban, social and economic quality of a project, separately to their compliance with planning and other regulations. He confirmed that government is interested in taking this proposal forward and invited the *Kamra* to put forward more concrete recommendations in this regard, an invitation which the *Kamra tal-Periti* will surely follow up on.

Following these interventions, the ensuing discussion was, as expected, one which challenged MEPA and government to address a wide range of issues. Among the various exponents, Prof. Dr Alex Torpiano, Dean of the Faculty for the Built Environment, commented on the fact that this reform had, up to now, been nothing but an administrative exercise, one that had done little, if anything, to address the much needed reform of the planning regime – a view shared by many. Planning, he stated, was the process of anticipation of future demands in urban development, not a mechanical process of assessment of proposals against a set of rules which, oftentimes, are outdated and restrictive in nature. He further commented on the fact that the planning application process was just one aspect of the work carried out by *periti* in their daily practice, which, as a result of the recent changes, had become one that was overly onerous and time-consuming, with no apparent gains in terms of improved quality in either the planning process or the final outcome. He urged MEPA to move away from trying to develop generic "Design Guidelines" which could be applied everywhere – an approach which had, in the past, led to some urban design howlers – in favour of a location-specific planning and design process.

A number of other issues were brought up such as the fact that the new EPCs are oftentimes ignoring guidance given by previous

atmment?

DCCs (Development Control Commissions) to *periti*, thus resulting in applications which are refused notwithstanding that they complied with such guidance given in the past. One *perit* commented on the fact that policy and regulations are not meant to be law, but are to be considered as guidelines to assist in the assessment of a proposal. *Periti* are inherently creative, pushing the boundaries to explore new ways of interpreting and adapting time tested norms in order to create novel approaches to building. Thus, he continued, while bureaucracy is sometimes necessary, it is unacceptable when this does not result in a better quality of the final product. The mechanical application of rules and regulations will ultimately result in the adulteration of our built environment, with monotonous, rigid and harsh buildings which, while complying fully with all regulations are devoid of any attempt at creativity and innovation, and which contribute nothing to the quality of our built environment.

A discussion also arose on the fact that the MEPA reform had eliminated the Outline Development Application (ODA) process. While this has been replaced by the Environment and Development Brief (EDB) application, albeit the procedures are not defined, the EDB is confined to be used only for projects of a certain import and size. While it may have had its deficiencies, a number of *periti* commented on the importance of retaining and improving the previous ODA process which served to establish the general principles and parameters for a number of projects, even, and particularly, small or medium scale ones. This position had already been presented to government by the *Kamra* in response to the 'Blueprint for MEPA Reform' and at a number of subsequent fora. The fact that this issue was brought up again during the debate certainly merits reconsideration by government and MEPA.

In his concluding remarks, Dr de Marco commented on the fact that the whole of the reform process is a balancing act –

periti want more flexibility, while the MEPA Auditor insists on rigidity; NGOs militate against ODAs while applicants insist that these are a necessary tool. Nevertheless, government's commitment is to continue to maintain an open channel of discussion with all players in order to persevere in the improvement of MEPA and the parameters within which it operates. He agreed on the need to address the issues of forward planning, and confirmed that government and MEPA will continue to work hand in hand with the *Kamra tal-Periti* in this regard.

Dr Stafrace concluded the debate by noting that whilst policy is necessary it should be written in such a way as to allow it to be flexibly implemented, and remarked that the discussion on this matter has to evolve further in order to reach a position that is acceptable to all players in the industry. Furthermore MEPA, he stated, was not born in 2011, but has a long history which needs to be credited and taken forward to address the challenges of today, and that once the teething problems of the recently implemented MEPA reform are ironed out, then one can move on to address the other issues highlighted during the evening. He referred to the fact that the reform process is dynamic and that while fine tuning is certainly taking place, this should not be construed as the commission of mistakes from the Authority's part, but as a commitment to improving and adapting the various systems and procedures. Here he thanked the *Kamra tal-Periti* for the assistance it has been giving MEPA during the various meetings that have been held this year, describing them as "fruitful" and conducive to the "opening of new horizons."

While I am sure to voice my colleagues' thoughts on this last point in saying that the *Kamra* has also found the meetings to be "fruitful" and has certainly found a receptive attitude to the comments and suggestions it has put forward, it has to be said that progress has been slow. A number of issues have been discussed including: the faults in the eApplications process

and IT related matters; the onerous and rigid application of the submission requirements and the irrelevance of some of these requirements to the planning process; the drafting and issuing of various Frequently Asked Questions which are posted both on MEPA's as well as on the *Kamra's* website; the operational aspects of the EPCs as well as their approach to the assessment of applications; issues relating to sanitary regulations and their interpretation. These are just some of the major issues that have been tackled, and the intention is to continue holding these meetings for as long as they are required in order to achieve the best possible working context within which *periti* can operate with the least possible aggravation, time wasting and frustration.

At the end of last April, the *Kamra* compiled a list of items that had been brought to MEPA's attention during these meetings and presented this to MEPA and to the Hon. de Marco. The list is long, and to date some of the items have been addressed, but a larger number remain outstanding. The *Kamra* recently also issued this list to its members for their information and invited them to continue to put forward their own comments and suggestions through the dedicated email address mepafeedback@ktpmalta.com. The response so far has been overwhelming (and in this case it is not necessarily a good thing!) and the *Kamra* invites all *periti* to continue to use this facility in order that it can continue to receive their concerns and to be of service to the profession during this period of transition. All comments and answers are also being uploaded on the *Kamra's* website www.ktpmalta.com, and as soon as the relevant answers are received from MEPA these will also be uploaded. It is only through maintaining open channels of communication with the profession that the *Kamra* can truly assist in bringing to the fore the problems and concerns faced by *periti* on a daily basis, and therefore the profession's

participation and support in this regard is paramount in order to achieve the goals described above.

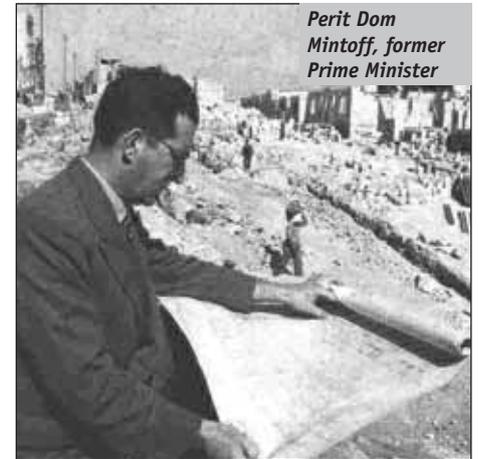
Meanwhile it remains to be seen whether the MEPA reform has, or will, achieve the ideals stipulated in the Blueprint published nigh on two years ago. These, as readers will remember, were classified under the four pillars of consistency, efficiency, accountability and enforcement. It would indeed be useful to undertake an exercise of assessment of the goals set out in such document and to assess how, if at all, these have been implemented, and to establish the results being achieved under each aspect.

While it is true that the *Kamra* and MEPA have been collaborating mainly on the procedural aspects of the reform, and while these are certainly important, one must not lose track of the other aspects which still need to be addressed. Here I would like to recall the *Kamra's* comments to the Blueprint document in relation to the need for quality in planning which must be underpinned by a more harmonised, more vision-driven, three-dimensional (as opposed to the current two-dimensional methodology) urban design approach to policy-making and implementation. The *Kamra tal-Periti* had at the time welcomed the proposal for the creation or strengthening of a central policy unit that addresses policy-making across all government sectors, particularly those which in some way affect the built environment. It is essential that amongst other safeguards MEPA must continue to have a strong input in policy-making as far as land use planning is concerned. It must, however, be stressed that it is the quality of planning and policy-making and the resultant environment which should at the end of the day be the key guiding factor.

Useful MEPA phone numbers
IT Help Desk: 22901591
Periti General Helpline: 99996662

PERITI AS POLITICIANS

Although politicians come from different backgrounds, periti (architects and civil engineers) are well represented both at parliament level and within the main political parties. The former prime minister Dom Mintoff, referred to as "Il-Perit" is the most high profile representative of the profession in Maltese politics, having dominated the local political scene for most of the second half of the 20th century. However, there have also been several other periti who have served as ministers, parliamentary secretaries, members of parliament, local councillors or political activists. In this current legislature, out of the 69 members of parliament, 9 are periti representing a healthy 13% of all MPs. Out of these 9 periti-MPs, one is currently a Minister and five others have served as ministers in past legislatures. Although periti are still relatively in a minority when compared to lawyer-MPs, they bring a unique range of skills and abilities, particularly excelling in a hands-on and pragmatic approach to problem solving and policy making. The Architect recently interviewed some of these periti who are also currently active in politics. They responded to two questions with direct relevance to the local context.



Perit Dom Mintoff, former Prime Minister

THE INTERVIEWEES:

Perit George Pullicino

Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs, *Partit Nazzjonalista*

Perit Jesmond Mugliett

Former Minister for Urban Development and Roads; Youth, Sports, Cultural Heritage and the Arts, *Partit Nazzjonalista*

Perit Karmenu Vella

Chairman Co-ordination Shadow Cabinet and former Minister of Industry; Public Works; Tourism, *Partit Laburista*

Perit Charles Buhagiar

Former Minister for Infrastructure and Public Works, *Partit Laburista*

Perit Carmel Cacopardo

Spokesman for Sustainable Development and Local Government, *Alternattiva Demokratika*

Perit George Pullicino

Being a *perit* has made me more keenly aware about the importance of public spaces to enhance the quality of people's lives. As Minister responsible for Works, I was keen to give urban spaces priority, especially in areas which, for commercial or touristic reasons, are frequented by larger numbers of people. A policy in favour of urban spaces resulted in what I always considered to be much needed projects including *Pjazza San Ġorġ* in Valletta; Ta' Qali



Adventure Park; *Pjazza Sant' Anna*, Ġnien Bonello du Puis in Sliema and the pedestrianisation of Bisazza Street in Sliema. Notwithstanding the opposition and criticism which inevitably accompanies each project, the people have given their vote of approval to these projects through their physical presence and constant use of these public spaces.

I also considered quality in design and finishes to be vital. My Ministry tries hard not to compromise quality even if it means that urban space projects turn out to be a

bit more expensive. Fortunately, the Prime Minister and my Cabinet colleagues were receptive and needed little convincing to endorse and adopt an approach favouring more investment and quality in urban spaces. Over the last three years, the investment in public spaces exceeded substantially the public space investments carried out in previous legislatures.

Perit Jesmond Mugliett

I consider myself privileged in having been responsible for a number of diverse sectors, such as sports, youth affairs, vocational education, the arts, science and technology, land transport, and urban regeneration. The approach to policy making in these sectors varies because of the specificities of the sectors and their particular needs in Malta. Being a *perit* probably influenced me to appreciate evidence-based policy making and base my policies on facts, feasibility studies, etc. I was particularly involved in drafting national youth policies, and the sports law, where the presence of a large number of voluntary organisations is strong. I was particularly sensitive to ensure ownership of the eventual stakeholders. Another major responsibility which I had was to ensure efficient utilisation of European Programmes (Youth Programmes, Education, Science and Technology) or European Funding. Being a *perit* also gave me the sense of urgency and project management approach to ensure the proper take up of these opportunities.

Perit Charles Buhagiar

I found my experience and expertise as

a practising *perit* very useful as a minister responsible for Public Works and Construction (which included roads and infrastructure). I could understand much better the problems facing the public sector, the challenges to modernise our country as well as the impact of political decisions on all stakeholders in particular contractors and *periti*. It was for these reasons that I piloted the formation of the Building Industry Consultative Council which has as its main aim the creation of a forum where all the stakeholders could voice their opinion on various issues. The ultimate aim was to ensure that the profession and the contractors become more specialised in sectors which, in my opinion, are considered important, in particular roads, restoration works and landscaping projects.

Institutional changes were also carried out such as the setting up of the Roads Department on a professional basis (including the introduction of road engineering course for *periti* at University up to Masters level) as well as the setting up of the Restoration Unit. I am pleased to note



THE FIRST QUESTION:

How has being a *perit* influenced your outlook and approach to creating public policy when you served as a minister or as a spokesman for the political party you represent?

that these initiatives were continued under various administrations and today we are witnessing the results of these reforms in the road projects and restoration projects we undertake.

Perit Karmenu Vella

Without any doubt, my training and experience has positively influenced my outlook and approach to creating public policy during my time as a minister. Policy makers come from diverse backgrounds. This background, coupled with a broader knowledge of the Ministry's objectives, undoubtedly affect both the Ministry's policy making process as well as its results. Apart from being positive team players, *periti* are usually well trained in taking up leading roles with greater responsibility within a project team or within an organisation. They recognise that problems are not solved by analysis alone. Imagination, awareness of context and the ability to communicate with others are also vitally important ingredients in planning and problem solving.

They are always involved at the early stage of projects when ideas are being generated and strategies are being formed. Thus they often feel motivated and enabled to fully contribute to early decision-making through their strategic thinking and communication skills. Apart from being more innovative, *periti* also tend to understand the social, political and economic drivers affecting policy decisions.

Perit Carmel Cacopardo

In all that we do we are influenced by our cumulative experiences. My education and professional training as a *perit* as



well as an environment professional have undoubtedly contributed significantly to my outlook and consequently to my political inputs. These place me in an advantageous position of being able to superimpose the observations of the common citizen on those of the professional. I will add that interaction with the profession is not always a positive experience due to, at times, a grossly insensitive attitude to environmental /sustainability issues by the

profession. The fact that a number of *periti* double up as developers is also negative and contributes to negative perceptions of the profession.

THE SECOND QUESTION: What do you perceive to be the main challenges facing the environment in Malta today?

Perit George Pullicino

There are many challenges, each of which requires investment and perseverance to be addressed. Waste management, for example, required a multifaceted approach over many years not only to manage the waste we produce but also to 'fix' the mistakes of the past. Magħtab is a case in point. The recycling plant at Sant' Antnin is another case where we had to overcome all types of hurdles in order to oversee the completion of the project. My time in politics has taught me that the infamous NIMBY (not in my backyard) syndrome is widespread in Malta. Another priority which needs a multifaceted approach is the issue of water management and protection of our water table. We have already started to implement a number of control measures, such as the installation of meters on all registered boreholes, but we need to integrate also the re-use of sewage treated effluent as one of our resources.

Another important challenge is air quality. This requires a multifaceted approach with substantial investments in public transport and energy production as well as better regulations to limit dust emission from construction sites and quarries. The quality of our urban and rural environments must remain topmost on the agenda of government. The challenge here is to realise that quality does not come from imposing restrictions on development. It is very easy to prohibit a development because of concerns of the impact it may have. It is much more difficult to achieve sustainability whereby developments which generate economic and social benefits are permitted without unduly compromising environmental objectives.

Linked to the urban environment, our historic fortified towns of Valletta, Mdina, Cottonera and the Citadel provide a further challenge, over and above the countless historic buildings and fortifications. The difficulty here is not just about getting the financial resources to restore them but also to identify sustainable long-term uses. All these challenges are linked with the one overriding challenge for any government

– an economy which is sufficiently robust and which generates sufficient income to sustain investments favouring the environment. Waste management, energy production, transport and urban projects all require substantial investment. Experience of other countries tells us that where the economy stutters, the environment is the first to suffer.

Perit Jesmond Mugliett

I think that the main challenges facing the environment are twofold:

- That the concept of sustainability truly permeates all sectors (eg energy, housing, transport, agriculture, water)
- That there is integration of the policy



making processes and assessment of the implementation measures

Seven years after the launch of the draft Sustainable Development Strategy we cannot say that sustainability is being given top priority in the sectors where it matters most, eg energy generation, agriculture, water production. In most EU member states, there are policy integration measures and environmental policy implementation assessment systems which seem to be absent in our administration. Our problems are the usual suspects: funding and lack of qualified personnel to engage in policy drafting, integration and implementation assessment. In my opinion, by giving sustainable development top priority on the political agenda, these problems could be overcome.

Perit Charles Buhagiar

In my opinion the main challenges facing the environment in Malta today are the threats to:

- Air quality in particular caused by excessive traffic on our roads
- Water – although various measures have been announced, very little has been implemented
- Land use – in my opinion MEPA (including the recent reform) has not managed to address the problem of conflicting uses on our limited land resource

These environmental issues threaten our very existence as a society and therefore require a much stronger political will to ensure that the measures needed to address these problems are implemented as quickly as possible.

Perit Karmenu Vella

In spite of all the efforts and the spending in trying to improve our environment, today we have a structural net environmental deficit. The bottom line is that our current environmental depletion highly outweighs our environmental restitution. The main challenges facing the environment in Malta today certainly include a lack of compliance by the citizens, an enforcement deficiency by the authorities, and above all the lack of a 360 degree vital national environmental policy by the supposedly guardians of our environment.

Unfortunately the protection, safeguarding and enhancing of our environment has been left in the hands of an institutional group of government appointed so-called experts



who have continuously confirmed that they are part of the environmental problem and not part of the solution. Incompetent, irresponsible and inconsistent decisions are damaging our environment at times to the point of a no-restoration position.

Perit Carmel Cacopardo

I believe that the main challenge facing the environment in Malta today is the gross understaffing of the regulatory authorities. This is accentuated by the determination of the authorities to prefer under-qualified or unqualified personnel in the areas where recruitment occurs. This is reflected in the state of the environment in Malta and in the very slow rate of EU environmental *acquis* absorption. It is also reflected in the attitudes of the regulatory authorities in Malta which generally view environmental issues as a burden. They have no idea of the impacts of their actions (or lack of them) on future generations and consequently on the long term social and economic development of the Maltese islands.

Talking Architecture and Civil Engineering

by *Perit Simone Vella Lenicker*

The first half of 2011 was rather prolific in terms of events relating to architecture and civil engineering. These activities serve as important occasions both on a social level, as well as in providing fora to discuss, criticise, dream and debate on topics which affect the environment in which we all live, work and play. The *Kamra tal-Periti* has, and will continue, to be active in the organisation of similar events, as well as supporting initiatives by others that have at heart the betterment of our built environment. Some of these events are outlined below.

Architecture Nights 2011

Another debate in the Architecture Nights series was held on the 31 May at the Aula Magna in Valletta. This time the event featured Kerry and Lindsay Clare, one of a small, select group of high-profile, award-winning husband and wife architectural teams in Australia, collaborating seamlessly together as a couple to produce outstanding buildings. Kerry and Lindsay have been in practice together for more than 30 years. Their work includes a wide and diverse range of architectural projects, from small remote houses to major urban and public buildings, many within south-east Queensland. Architecturally, they are consistently acknowledged for a rare combination of design excellence and high-level environmental performance.

Throughout their career, they have considered sustainability to be a design matter, not just a technical concern. They regard the desire to achieve high environmental performance as an opportunity rather than a restriction. Importantly, they achieve this goal through simple, passive and cost-effective measures. Their buildings allow occupants to engage with architecture and the world outside, reinforcing the essential connection with place. These principles were highly evident in the projects they presented and discussed with those present at the evening lecture.



Cotton Tree social housing project by Clare Design

Since starting practice in 1979, Kerry and Lindsay have received 33 state and national awards from the Australian Institute of Architects for housing, public, educational, commercial and recycling projects. In the late nineties, Lindsay and Kerry Clare left their office on the Sunshine Coast to contract as Design Directors for the New South Wales Government Architects Office. In those 2 years they achieved many urban design successes and made an impact with their buildings including the No 1 Fire Station, Castlereagh Street. Since their time with the Government Architects Office they were founding directors of Architectus Sydney. Here they have produced the most significant cultural building, winning the design competition for the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA). In 2010 Lindsay + Kerry recommenced practice as Clare Design. Their work has been included in over 150 nation-

al and international books, periodicals and publications. Exhibitions of their work have been held in New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and the 1991 and 2008 Venice Biennale, the 1996 Milan Triennale, the 1996 UIA Congress Barcelona and the Place Makers - Contemporary Queensland Architects at GoMA in 2008. Their Cotton Tree social housing project was selected as one of ten worldwide for inclusion in the "Ten Shades of Green" exhibition in New York; an exhibition demonstrating architectural excellence and environmental sensitivity organised by the Architectural League of New York.

Further information on Clare Design can be found at www.claredesign.com.au.

ECCE General Meeting and International Conference

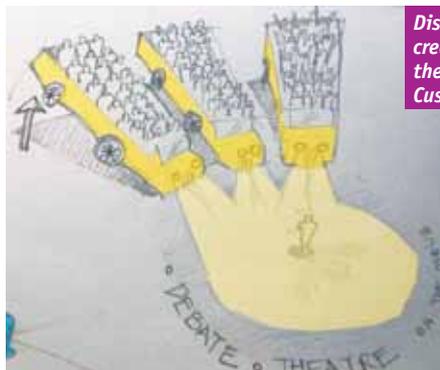
The main event on the *Kamra's* calendar so far this year was the hosting of the

53rd General Meeting of the European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE) which was held here on the 6th and 7th May. This is a twice yearly event where delegates from Member Organisations of ECCE come together to discuss topics which are relevant to the profession at the time and which are of importance to the development of the profession of Civil Engineering.

Attending the General Meeting, besides delegates from twenty European Countries were the President of the World Council of Civil Engineers, the President of the European Council of Engineering Councils and the Senior Vice-President of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

In parallel with this General Meeting, the *Kamra* also organised a Conference titled "Sustainable Development: Civil Engineering and the Built Environment", which was held on the 5th May. The conference, which was very well attended, included a number of papers by both local and foreign speakers. The day's events were split under four headings: Education in Civil Engineering, Transportation, Planning & Infrastructure, Sustainable Construction, Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Sources, and Structural Engineering & Applications. Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs, the Hon George Pullicino delivered the inaugural address, while the Senior Vice-President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Mr Richard Coackley delivered the key-note speech at the same Conference. It would certainly be an impossible task to try to synthesise the contents of the conference into a couple of paragraphs, however those interested in reading more about the papers presented are invited to contact the *Kamra tal-Periti* for a copy of the proceedings of the conference which have been collated into a softbound volume.

All the events related to the Conference and General Meeting were held at the Le Meridien Hotel at St Julians.



Disused buses adapted to create a debate theatre on the move - project by Edward Cuschieri, Salvatore Palma

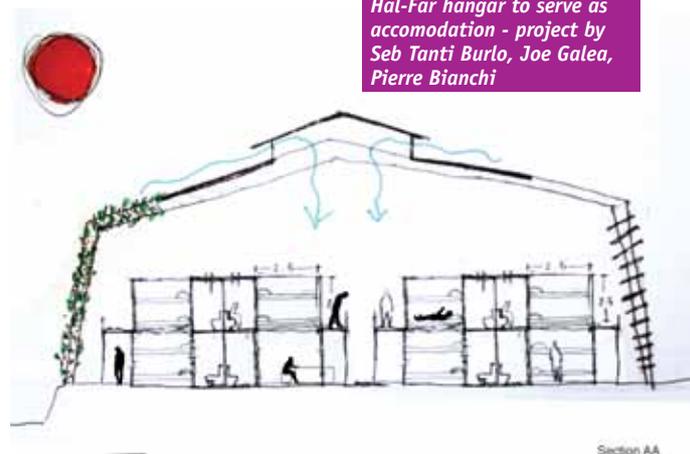
Towards Frugality – Simply Look Around You

The first few days of June brought together leading international protagonists from Spain, the UK, Africa, Italy and the USA for a symposium attended by close to a hundred local and foreign participants. The aim of the symposium was to lead participants down a route to a new culture, driven by a design-led revolution in the fields of architecture and design. The speakers included: Cinzia Abbate of Abbate e Vigevano Architects, Italy; Sarah Wigglesworth of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects, UK; Luca Stasi from Ctrl+Z Architects, Mexico; Franco La Cecla, Anthropologist and Architect, Italy; Alberto Miceli Farrugia of Architecture Project, Malta; Nina Maritz of Nina Maritz Architects, Namibia; Elena Barthel from Rural Studio, USA; and Ersela Kripa & Stephen Mueller, co-

founders of AGENCY Architecture LLC, Italy. These all shared their vision for a new world order, and illustrated innovative approaches to the challenges of a world running out of limited resources.

Quoting from *Una guida all'architettura frugale* (2010): "The idea of frugal architecture is proposed as a counter-trend: a residual architecture that is capable of making best possible use of natural and local materials, or recycling those that would otherwise become waste ... Frugal architecture belongs to a specific site and a specific culture; it adopts systems of construction – typical or highly innovative ... in order to create even nonreplicable structures ...

Proposal for stacking of containers within the Hal-Far hangar to serve as accommodation - project by Seb Tanti Burlo, Joe Galea, Pierre Bianchi

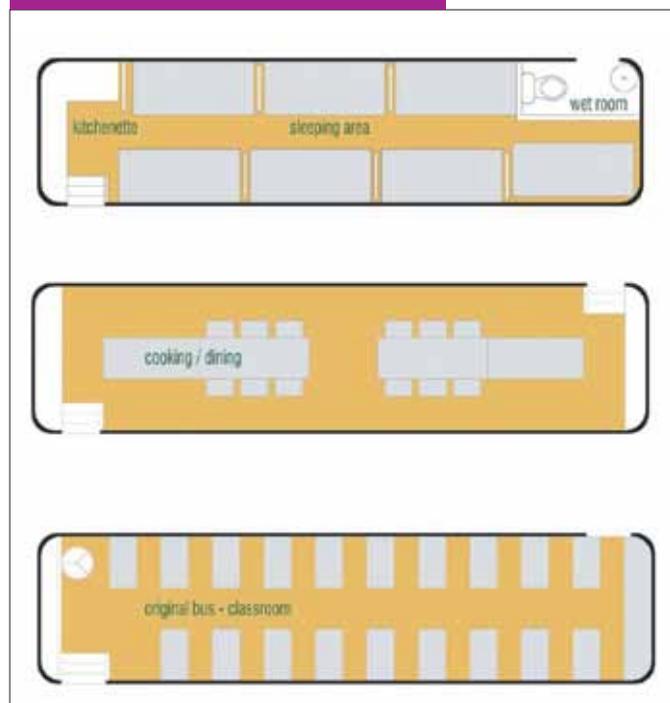


look at creative and frugal ways to provide ideas for the accommodation of



Sun and stones; using gabion structures & PVs on pitched roofs to create living space - project by Joanna Spiteri Staines, Sandra Mifsud, Rosanna Constantino

Various programs for disused buses - project by Patty Grech, Violet Kulewska, Amelia Saint George (see also front cover)

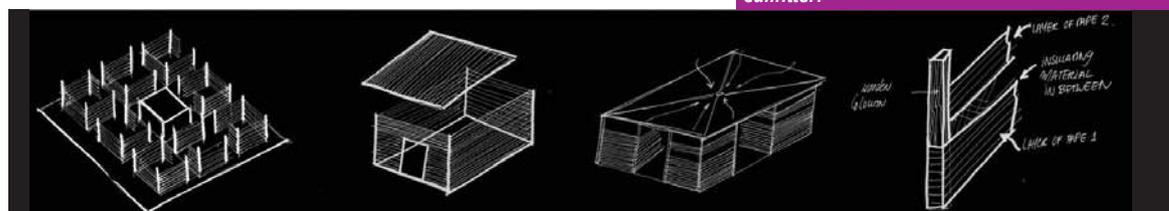


These [frugal] buildings, often realised using leftover materials and with limited resources and budgets, offer positive social effects."

While acknowledging the global scale of the issue, Towards Frugality suggested ways to tackle sustainability at a local level with responses tailored to site specific con-

the large number of migrants currently held at the various local Open Centres in lieu of the fragile tents that, while providing some shelter, are adversely affected by the local weather extremes. Rubble gabions, buses, old containers, scaffolding systems and glass

Involving migrants in the creation of their own environment, empowering them with skills and resources - project by Angelo Carlo Valsesia, Laura Marcheggiano



authorities and *periti* that a change, however small, will come about towards the creation of a more sustainable environment. Frugality in architecture is not about making iconic statements but about demonstrating that architecture can be responsible and sustainable, and at the same time contemporary and relevant.

The event was part financed by the Malta Arts Fund, Halmann Vella, Multigas, BOV and FXB Furniture Group. It was also supported by Kasco Paper, Auntie Lucy and FACES.

An exhibition showcasing the results of the workshop will be held on the 14 July 2011 at Halman Vella Ltd showroom in Mosta Road, Lija.

Tape wrapped around wooden columns to form two skins with an airgap in between to create living quarters - project by Simon Grech, Elisa Camilleri



Perit Alberto La Ferla
Photo Courtesy Ms A.Soler

Perit Alberto La Ferla (1898-1942) – Striving towards Modernism

BY PERIT EDWARD SAID

In past issues of this periodical I have attempted to trace a number of lesser-known architects whose careers more-or-less peaked during the inter-war years of the last century. It is fascinating to study the way they portrayed their ideologies and sometimes the socio-political situation of Malta at the time in which they designed. Some made bold statements challenging traditionalism whilst others negated new styles altogether, adopting instead their own distinctive eclectic concepts based on the vernacular. We have seen how Gustavo Vincenti (1888-1974) experimented with

Arts Nouveau and Deco, how Silvio Mercieca (1888-1954) reflected his staunch political beliefs in the countenance of the stately homes he created and how Joseph Cachia Caruana (1894-1981) practically disregarded Art Nouveau, preferring to use vernacular classicism in his many residential projects.

What is particularly interesting about some of these personalities, besides their intriguing biographies, is how their clearly most coveted canvas, the new town of Sliema, became a battleground in which they crossed stylistic swords. This pique can be savoured whilst strolling down Amery Street which has so far largely escaped the axe of 'greeddevelopment'. Here, some of Vincenti's most iconic creations stand, hallmarked with the ubiquitous tassels and buckles of Art



Beatrice, Amery Street
corner with Milner Street



Houses in Old College
Street photographed by
the architect himself

Nouveau. Yet in this street another architect was strongly repudiating this new style, designing instead according to a chiefly classical school garnished with his own idiosyncrasies. This was Alberto La Ferla.

Born in Valletta in 1898, he graduated in the early 1920s, coming first in the course which won him a scholarship to Turin. He later went on to Rome where he worked in the studio of Enrico Del Debbio, then busily designing Mussolini's grand schemes for the city. In Italy, La Ferla acquired a fondness for the works of *Manneristi* Giulio Romano and Andrea Palladio from which he borrowed certain traits in the residential commissions he attained soon after his return to Malta.

It is clear that he was not happy

with the situation here where Art Nouveau was slowly distorting the classical idiom. His earlier buildings are purely traditionalist creations, taking inspiration from Valletta's Hospitaller architecture together with some of the subtler Mannerisms of Palladio and Romano, because La Ferla was indeed a Mannerist struggling to detach himself from the norm. Rusticated masonry, *guttae*, large windows sitting on elongated scrolls, Palladian porticoes, bold panelling and breaking up of facades and rooflines are some of his preferred inclusions. Many of these elements are found in the exquisite 'Beatrice' in Amery corner with Milner Streets, named after the Dantesque character and commissioned by Mons. Giuseppe Psayla-Cumbo. He also paid spe-



Detail of Cactus House, Sliema



House on Xemxija Hill designed by Laferla in the early 1930s (photograph taken by architect's grandson in the 1980s)



Walvicfra Apartments in Sliema photographed by the architect himself (demolished)

cial attention to the design of the apertures and wrought iron fittings employing motifs such as the shield-panels on doors and balconies, as well as railings with basic spiralling, features one would normally associate with the 1960s and 70s. These can be seen on a number of his facades along Amery, Milner and Howard Streets.

Soon enough he became a fervent rationalist, simplifying his designs further, retaining however the monumentalism he had acquired from his time in Italy. He cleverly succeeded in striking symmetry to single-fronted houses as can be seen in his Milner Street, Prince of Wales Road and Rue d'Argens terraced residences. 'Warrior' built for a Maltese Royal Naval seaman who served on a ship by that name in Old College Street, Sliema is typical of his passion for the monumental. Incidentally, Perit La Ferla was affectionately known by many as *Il-Warrior* due to his persevering personality and one likes to think that in this facade he took the opportunity to display his architectural prowess

complete with signature.

Next, La Ferla designed a row of houses further along in the same street for which he stripped away practically all ornamentation from the facades, even the railings are of the most basic design. These modest homes are undoubtedly one of Malta's earliest and best examples of civil architecture expressing a balanced compromise between traditionalism and modernism.

Walking up Prince of Wales Road (today Manuel Dimech Street) from Balluta, past Psaila's Art Nouveau bulwark, just before the Old College Street viaduct stands a house which despite its standard three-cane frontage, evokes a unique sense of grandeur. Renato La Ferla designed 'Cactus House' for his client and friend Frederick Gollcher. Everything is rectilinear, the only curved element in the facades being the backs of the pair of square-headed niches at first floor, something never seen before in Malta. The simple yet symbolic design of the balcony railing and main door fanlight coolly portraying Saharian cactus

and palm tree motifs screams in contrast with the Art Nouveau floral lushness down the road. Again the oversized window at ground floor stands out, sitting now on angular brackets, an echo of the earlier rolling scrolls La Ferla liked so much. The proportions of the openings, panelling and crowning cornice are superb. Once more he has wittily given a modestly-sized, single-fronted dwelling a majestic symmetrical facade. On the photograph taken by the architect himself soon after it was built, is the name written in his own hand 'CACTVS HOVSE - MCMXXXI' in the true spirit of the Stile Littorio he cherished.

Most progressive of all residential projects is undoubtedly the house this architect built for his family on Xemxija Hill which today still stands although somewhat humilatingly decorated. La Ferla softened his style through the introduction of curved edges, striking a bold balance between verticality and horizontality reminiscent of Le Corbusier. His approach was equally innovative in the outright asymmetry, use of reinforced

concrete cantilevers, wide and angled balcony openings to maximise views, and clean aperture and railing design. Completed by 1936, this house was nominated for an Architectural Award two years later.

Besides residences, La Ferla was commissioned with a number of commercial and institutional schemes. By the end of the 1930s, he had turned totally to rationalism. The only hints at ornamentation at the new Arcidiacono showroom for instance in Rue d'Argens (destroyed during the war) was the plain pairs of columns on either side of the doorways. At the office block called Walvicfra in Prince of Wales Road he projected an extension to an existing building by introducing a 'square-arched' screen-portico carrying an upper floor with broad fenestration and cubic panelling. La Ferla took a fully progressive approach to his works on the Old Lyceum in Hamrun and proposals for a new Government School in Msida. His latter contribution was a forerunner of a national school-building

programme carried out in the 50s and 60s characterised by the modernist architecture, a subject which deserves to be discussed in a separate article.

When war broke out in 1940, Alberto La Ferla was interned. He was one of the few not deported to Uganda and was kept at the St Agatha Camp in Rabat. On the 21st March 1942 he was killed during an air-raid after the compound received a direct hit.

His progressive strive for architectural modernity Malta was carried on by his son Renato whom I would like to thank for readily providing me with facts and insights about his father's career.

Selected bibliography

- Camilleri, George E. (2009). *The Architecture Award (1936-9), in Treasures of Malta, No. 45, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, Malta.*
- Said, Edward (2011). *The Art Nouveau Movement in Maltese Architecture, in Art Nouveau and Malta: An Introduction, Midsea Books Ltd, Malta.*
- Tonna, Jo (2004). *L-Arkitettura F'Malta, PIN, Malta*

Italo Raniolo

RICHARD ENGLAND REMEMBERS AN OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUE AND DEAR FRIEND

With the demise of Italo Raniolo on the 22nd April 2011, Malta lost one of its most brilliant structural engineers and the profession an admired and esteemed colleague. For me however, Italo was much more than that, he was a true, coveted and valued friend. Our first encounter took place over five decades ago, when as a third year student at the University he valiantly attempted to pass on some knowledge of physics to a Year 1 student far more inclined towards the arts than the sciences. Even from those early days, I still recall his articulate and logical thinking, although I am sure that it must have, many a time crossed his mind to give up on the job, in view of my lack of response and interest in the subject. Despite this, to his credit, my exam results proved successful and my passage to the architecture course proper

“When a friend dies, part of oneself splits off”

– Stephen Dobyns

provided more enthusiasm and satisfaction. To this day, I still recall his determination and didactic qualities, his sharpness and quick thinking and above all, his particularly enduring emotive way of expressing himself. Little did I know then, that our lives and professional paths were to be in future intertwined and that I was to be so greatly enriched by a long lasting and bonding friendship. Truly, “*friends are the family you choose*”. After his graduation in 1958, our paths temporarily parted, although both of us proceeded to pursue post-graduate studies in Milan, we were not there concurrently. Even before his Milan Polytechnic days, Italo had already distinguished himself as a young promising structural engineer in the Public Works Department working on what, at

the time, were novel and complex works; the Valletta Grand Harbour Deep Water Quay and the adjacent Grain Silo structures.

It was to be in 1966 that our paths were to cross again. My father, who ran the England + England Studio, soon realised that the workload of hotels, holiday homes and apartments was proving too taxing for our then limited office staff. Sharp-eyed for talent and quality, he set his eye on two young architects and civil engineers from the Public Works Department, Italo Raniolo and Albert Borg Costanzi, and invited them to join the firm. This was the beginning of what was for me to be a life-long professional collaboration and a long lasting, intimate and special friendship with both. During Italo’s time at England + England, he was responsible for the structural design of all the hotels designed by the firm. These included Ramla Bay, Dolmen, Hyperion, Cavaliere, Tower Palace and Salina Bay. He was also responsible for the structure of the reinforced concrete high-rise apartments at St. George’s Park and the prestigious Vernon Club conversion to the Central Bank of Malta.

Soon after the death of my father in 1969, we professionally parted company and Italo set up his own private practice. However, England + England still continued to engage him as a structural consultant on many a project, right up to his untimely demise. His own practice soon flourished and over a period of forty years he was responsible for a number of outstanding projects. Worthy of particular mention are the structural designs of Michael Sandle’s Bell Memorial in Valletta, and those of the Portomaso underground parking garage and the A3 Towers in Paola. The most outstanding of his projects must surely be his remedi-



Italo Raniolo

al structural solutions to the problematic St. Sebastian Church in Qormi, which he crowned with a magnificent shell dome structure. Solutions for the construction of a dome over this building long plagued by severe structural problems proved to be an insolvable solution and many engineers, including esteemed international firms had declined the job because of the risks and dangers involved.

Another of his noteworthy projects is the superbly engineered Tal-Qroqq multilevel intersection. Other significant and important contributions were his designs of innovative pre-fabricated and prestressed concrete elements, while working as a consultant to such firms as Ballut Blocks, Blokrete Ltd, Attard Bros. and Polidano Limited, and he was also responsible, as both architect and engineer for a large number of factories and other industrial buildings.

Perhaps the most challenging and interesting of our collaborations involved his structural solution to my complex Church design of St. Francis of Assisi in Qawra. I fondly remember his chiding me for cutting columns in mid-air and his having to work out a support system for the consequential isolated floating roof structure, though, of course, his razor-sharp mind was quick to find the solution.

In 1975, our professional activities were again united in the A+E quintet of professionals set up to work in the early days of the building boom in Saudi Arabia. In this partnership, which lasted till 1982, Italo was responsible for all the structural design of the firm’s projects in Jeddah and Riyadh, the most important of which

was the Conference Centre for the Sports City of Riyadh in collaboration with the Basle firm of Suter & Suter. It was during this period that he was also responsible for the structural design and detailing of this Swiss firm’s project for the Ministry of Ports Building in Riyadh. During these years, on our many visits to Saudi, our friendship deepened and I particularly recall his insistence on mandatory return routes from Saudi via Rome in order to sample the excellent dishes of *Il Corsaro* which remained throughout his life his favourite restaurant. It was thanks to his introduction that I was able to enjoy many a subsequent luscious dinner there, as it was also to him that I owe my penchant for the rich *Valtellina* grape Italian red wine *Inferno* which he also enthusiastically introduced me to.

Over a lifelong friendship, apart from parallel culinary tastes, we shared another interest, a passionate love for Italian opera. If you really wanted to see all his parental Italianate exuberance and emotion emerge, one had only to bring up the subject of the operas of Giuseppe Verdi. While discussing the subject, and various tenor and soprano voices and their respective interpretations, it was as if a wire within him surged. Our opinions, likes and dislikes, rarely differed. I know he had a strong passion and almost idolatry reverence for the voice of soprano Leontyne Price as he also had a passionate admiration for the angel voice of Miriam Gauci. Leontyne Price’s and Plácido Domingo’s 1969 *Trovatore*

recording under the exhilarating baton of Zubin Mehta remained one of his favourite recordings, as was also Domingo’s commanding performance on RCA as *Otello* under James Levine. More recently, we also both shared an ardent admiration for the golden voice of Joseph Calleja. Tenors and Verdi’s operas always dominated our conversations even when we met on purely professional matters. While I know my tenors, Italo knew more about Verdi, especially the composer’s early works. I must concede



Tal-Qroqq multilevel intersection

that I considered him a most valuable and referential didactic source on this subject.

As I reverse the years in memory, I recall our many amiable connections, for although death ends the life of friends, it never obliterates their memory. “*You went suddenly, your life force still optimal, your work unfinished ... a way of leaving the parts unequal to the sum*” ... and now only absence reigns. So much absence!

As a colleague over these many years, I have benefited from Italo’s expertise; yet above this professional collaboration I shall always remain particularly privileged and proud to have shared a close and special friendship. Being in his company was always an enriching experience. To his wife, Josephine and his children Anna Maria, Marco, Alessandro, Daniela and Francesca, I offer my sincerest condolences. He will remain in their memory as a treasured husband and dear father, and to his grandchildren, an enduring and much loved grandfather. He will live on, for to live in the memory of those you loved, is not to die.



A 1950 Italo Raniolo Sketch given to his grandson Sebastian Grima

The latest in energy efficiency

From nanotechnology to integrated PV panels

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF THEIR RECENT CONFERENCE, 'ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE', ELECTROFIX PROVIDE THE ARCHITECT WITH FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE LATEST ENERGY EFFICIENCY PRODUCTS THEY HAVE JUST INTRODUCED TO THE MARKET IN MALTA INCLUDING THE NEW NANOTECHNOLOGY BASED LINE OF PRODUCTS.

Voltage Optimisation

Voltage optimisation is the foundation of every energy efficiency programme. It cuts energy use and carbon emissions by up to 20% and reduces maximum demand by up to 15%. It also prolongs the life and reliability of all equipment that runs on electricity.

eBox® and ePower® power optimisation and energy efficiency devices caused a sensation at the Conference! eBox® is a variable impedance auto-transformer which is designed to optimise light sources. It is an energy saving device that fits between the electricity supply and the distribution board and through a combination of voltage optimisation, power factor correction and harmonic filtration (eBox® exclusive technology), it reduces consumption and therefore the cost of the electricity typically by between 20% and 40%. eBox® also extends the life of lighting elements by up to 300%. Return on investment is typically between 12 and 36 months.

ePower® is the industrial version that caters for both lighting as well as motive power. It can be installed in any commercial or industrial location, as long as three-phase line voltage is available. ePower® has been designed to prevent problems concerning uneven loads, it optimises consumption and re-balances energy transmission.

eBox® and ePower® have been installed in various locations overseas from shopping malls to airports and proven case studies exist with recognisable brand names like CocaCola, McDonalds and Luton Airport. Reported savings have been in the regions of £1000 a year for one lighting tower and over £10,000 a year for one warehouse.

Nanotechnology products

Nanotechnology products are the latest to hit the Energy Efficiency market. These new revolutionary products are changing the face of the insulation and protective coatings market.

Spaceloft® by Aspen Aerogels is the best performing thermal insulation available on the market today — 13.5 K value. Spaceloft®'s thin profile offers the same U-value as traditional thick insulation with minimum interior space lost. It provides both energy and CO2 savings and payback in less than 12 months for typical applications.

Nansulate® insulation and protection coatings provide thermal insulation as well as corrosion, mould, moisture, flame, chemical and UV resistance. Nansulate® provides a simplified approach to insulation - you can just paint the product on walls, ceilings, wood, concrete, pre-painted walls. It can also be used to insulate pipes, tanks, metal buildings and other metal surfaces. It has a clear, invisible and matte finish. This patented technology, sold only under the Nansulate® brand name, has been providing dramatic energy saving solutions for industrial, commercial and residential customers around the world. The product

has been proven effective by independent laboratory and government testing. Customers typically report 20%-40% energy savings.

Glass Protection and Maintenance

The more widespread use of glass in architectural design whilst aesthetically pleasing does pose a headache due to the cleaning and maintenance required. New to Malta, Diamon Fusion International®'s (DFI) nanotechnology product is an award-winning protective coating which can be easily applied on existing surfaces in homes, businesses as well as on vehicles. DFI generates an ultra-thin protective layer of optically clear material which is water repellent and impact resistant, leaving no points of attachment for water and corrosive agents. The product is applicable to most surfaces containing silica (silicon dioxide) such as glass, ceramic tile, porcelain, granite and quartz. Treated surfaces become highly water-repellent, and there-

fore require less frequent cleaning. With a single application – provided it is done properly - maintenance time is guaranteed to be reduced up to 90%.

Treatment with DFI also makes surfaces four times more oil repellent than untreated surfaces, as well as scratch and impact resistant - treated glass is 10 times more resistant to cracks than an untreated one. The product also helps protect against mould and bacteria.

PV panels and architectural integrations

Advancements in renewable energy products also provide architects with the opportunity to incorporate PV panels into a building's physical structure. The new Pramac frameless PV panels are perfectly suited for architectural integrations.

Pramac are one of the best Swiss thin-film PV panels on the market. Their new line called MicroMorph are manufactured using silicon thin film double junction technology. These products are the most efficient thin-film modules in the sector. These modules are particularly suited to the Maltese climate as they are more heat resistant than crystalline modules. Temperature affects module efficiency, in fact, for every degree above 25°C ambient temperature, efficiency decreases by 0.5% on crystalline modules and by 0.2% on thin-film modules.

ElectroFix has established itself as one of the leaders in energy efficiency and renewable energy in Malta. The company was founded in 1998 and specialised in electrical and mechanical services. Their leading products have been installed in some of the largest private enterprises as well as government organisations. They have been responsible for the 2 largest commercial installations of both PV systems as well as solar water farms on the island.

For further information visit www.electrofixenergy.com

eBox Sample Case Studies

HOTEL WITH 100 ROOMS (ANNUAL VALUES)	Before	After	Saving
TOT energy consumption (KWh)	355.085	285.232	69.853 KWh
Electric costs (Euro)	35.509	28.523	€ 6.986
Electric saving %			19.67%
Lamps maintenance costs (Euro)	25,333.00	10,326.00	€ 15,007.00
Lamps maintenance saving			59.24 %
Total saving			36.15%
Payback (including maintenance saving)			19 Months

SHOPPING CENTRE (MULTI FLOORS)

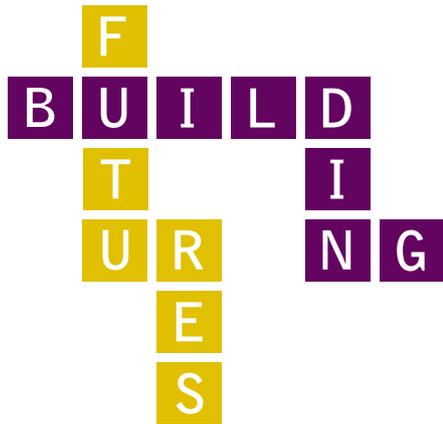
- Electric Saving.....13,30%
- Lamps Maintenance Saving...61,28%
- Total Saving.....31,06%
- Payback.....20 Months

ITALIAN SUPERCONDUCTOR FACTORY

- Electric Saving.....22,2%
- Lamps Maintenance Saving.....29,6%
- Total Saving.....24,2%
- Payback.....36 Months

"THE FUTURE FOR ARCHITECTS?"

A SYNOPSIS



Last March, a study entitled "The Future for Architects?" was published by Building Futures. This report sets out to explore the future role of architects, asking: who will design our buildings in 2025; what roles will those trained in architecture be doing then and how will architectural practice have changed as a result?

Through a series of one-to-one interviews and round table sessions with various UK professionals, the study aims to examine the breadth of those who shape the built

"In 10 years we probably will not call ourselves an architecture practice, it will be something else entirely."

Architect – Small metropolitan boutique practice

environment, including traditional architects and those working in expanded fields of practice, as well as clients, consultants and contractors. The resulting speculations certainly constitute an opportunity for discussion and interrogation - an exploration of the imminent changes likely to affect the industry over the next 15 years. Here, *the Architect* takes a look at some of the salient points of the study.

Who will design our built environment in 2025?

The report concludes that there are certain sectors of the industry that could remain relatively stable during the coming ten to fifteen years. These include:

- The **small local general practice** which "will be judged by its ability to produce a personal service, with one-stop-shop design that is clearly differentiated in terms of value-added from their competitors: the 'plan-smiths' and contractors." There appears to be consensus that such practices will continue to operate similarly to the way they do today, facing little competition from other professionals. However, the study notes, "they may face competition from non-architect qualified players such as contractors and plan drawers, who will continue to put pressure on fees. This type of practice would be best positioned if they offered a turn-key service, containing all the services required for a small-build project within one company – thus simplifying the process for potential clients."
- The **international star architects** who "will be judged by their ability to produce eye popping, 'wow-factor' design that might help their clients to raise funds, while making a significant contribution to the brand profile of their client." Given the current economic climate it is likely, according to the report, that such architects will be engaged to "complete concept design for the international market,

working with local architects to complete the detailed design."

- **Specialist niche practices** which, the report states, "will be judged by their ability to provide increasingly complex, niche services as part of a larger design team and process." Here the report refers to the increasing need, as buildings become more complex and technical, of specialists in various fields related to the industry.
- **Traditional regional delivery driven practices** which "will be judged by their ability to provide cost effective, process driven services to lay clients who have little interest in design for its own sake." The report concludes that the vast majority of UK clients are "not interested in 'fancy architecture' and are most com-

"I think the entire range of middle-sized practices from about 25-150 people will be gone, and we'll end up with two very distinct types of practice at each end of the market."

Chief Executive – Global Consultancy

fortable working with local practices that are known through the local business community and where the networks of connections allows for easy communications and simple solutions. The success of these practices will be dependent on the local economy, and will be driven by repeat business and word of mouth recommendations rather than openly competitive procurement. They will work

as much on refurbishment projects as on new build and will provide a strong, no nonsense, local service. In some senses these practices are the most traditional of all."

In this section of the report, Building Futures goes on to identify those parts of the industry which are most likely to experience growth in the next five to ten years, including practices in emerging economies and subcontractors or specialist suppliers. It also identifies those parts of the industry considered to be under the greatest pressure, including medium sized design-led practices and small boutique practices.

What roles might those trained in architecture have in 2025?

The report first attempts to answer the question "What is an architect?" On examination of the current role of architects, it is evident that, while the core of the architect's traditional practice remains, many "had expanded upon the type of work that would traditionally be considered the architect's field, offering a broader range of services ... There are architects working in the fields of set and stage design, public art, installation design, design of public space, brand design, community consultation, research, think tanks and urban design, as well as those working on the demand side of more traditional building contracts." Thus, the report concludes, "in the future we may see more practitioners working in broad, interdisciplinary, creative and strategic businesses, as well as holding positions of seniority in the construction industry."

How might practice change by 2025?

"Architects possess a huge range of skills, many of which go unnoticed, unused or most importantly unpaid!" The study indicates that there was a unanimous feeling among those interviewed that certain ser-

vices such as analysis, brief development, strategic thinking and preparatory work that form the basis of the early design stages are provided for free and that “this would never happen in any other profession.” A number of the practices interviewed had already, or were planning to formalise the diverse services that they offer. This formal splitting of skills and jobs can enable architects to provide services that clients do not traditionally look to an architect to do. “Importantly, it can also enable them to advise other architects and collaborate with them without being competitive. This

“Our main threat is not being paid for the work we do – particularly the brief making part. But we never turn down unpaid work because it might lead to paid work in the future.”

Architect – Small metropolitan boutique practice

approach can allow a practice to position itself on the client/user side of the table – opening a broader spectrum of opportunities.” Thus branching into various fields of consultancy appears to be one of the directions in which the profession is heading. The study reveals that only 50% of UK practices have a business plan and goes on to indicate that “in order to compete against the cheaper workforces from the emerging markets and the financially savvy mega consultancies, the architect must learn to speak the language of the client – particularly to become financially literate. The contemporary division between design practices – the classic studio architect and the more commercial consultancy appears to be becoming increasingly polarised. It is the continuing distinction between these two that threatens the former. An architect needs, as a matter of urgency, to be able to sell their skills with reference to cost to be of use to the client. The profession must face up to the reality that the context

within which it now practices has changed so dramatically that the skill set required must also shift – financial skills should now be considered core. In addition to financial literacy, the client-savvy architect must be able to see beyond ‘building a building’ and offer a service that embraces the client’s broader aims – becoming a problem solver as well as a designer.”

The outcome of the study also indicates that the culture of practice is becoming increasingly important. A number of the architects and designers interviewed “had built their brand on the basis of a very particular way of working, or a set of founding principles. This was consistently tied to ideas of longevity and of survival beyond the founding partners. The young professionals and students frequently described practices in terms of culture – describing their ideal employer with very specific provisos regarding underlying ideas, ethical stance, attitude and many other culture-related themes. This may not be a new phenomenon, but could be an increasingly vital part of practice in the future.”

Conclusions

Given the small interview base and the range of different views about the future for architects, the report states that “it has not been feasible to consolidate them into a single readily digestible picture, nor did we expect to. However we have tried to tease out what trends are likely to be most influential, to place them in a wider global context, and to consider what this means for the industry as it is currently structured.” The main goal of this study is to stimulate both those intending to embark on a career in architecture, as well as those who have already chosen to work within the profession, “to reflect on how rapidly the context in which they work is changing, and the need to be proactive in responding to it if they are to optimise their contribution.” The report further notes that “in recent decades, architecture has been a popular

“I think we need to stop being overly polite and learn how to be business people.”

Architect – Medium sized design-led practice

“The problem is the separation between what architects want to do, and the reality of the marketplace.”

Client Advisor – Global Consultancy

choice for undergraduates, with the consequence that more students achieve a first degree in architecture than can be absorbed into conventional architectural roles. This is also true of those who complete a second degree, some of whom decide that those conventional roles hold little appeal, and who choose to take on other functions in the property and construction sectors – or find themselves working in the often more innovative fringes of practice developing new services in related areas and opening up new markets. Architectural education, (like those of the other professions), is generally undertaken in isolation from other parts of the wider industry, which can give rise to a sense of exclusiveness. This makes it more difficult for architects to perceive their role as part of the construction industry, with many preferring to emphasise their place in the wider creative sector. While the latter is a key element in our sense of national identity, and an important part of the UK economy, its economic contribution is not at the same level as construction, and as a source of personal income is far more marginal.”

Finally, the concluding remarks to the study state that “It can sometimes seem that the long shadow of the gentleman architect still hangs over the profession, obscuring the fainter, earlier memory of the master builder. Contemporary society has more interest in the latter than the former. While the future for the practice of architecture as a discrete business is uncertain, the opportunities for architects have never been greater, notwithstanding the current recession. However to grasp those opportunities architects will need to develop greater financial nous and commercial acumen, to welcome the integration of their work with others in the wider industry, and continue to work hard to promote the extraordinary benefits which society gains from the design process.”

How is this relevant to the local profession?

The study in itself may be criticised for being based on a limited interview sample, and therefore may be strongly biased by the views of those interviewed, thus not necessarily reflecting the true mood of the profession. The report is based entirely on the profession in the UK, which experiences very different economies of scale to the local market. However, some parallels may be drawn.

The fact that the profession, even locally, is changing is an undeniable fact. Many factors have a bearing on this, including the economic slowdown, the introduction of more stringent legislative frameworks and the various other demands placed on the profession. However, are these clear? Do we know where the construction industry is heading, and with it the future of the profession? Certainly it would be an interesting exercise to carry out a similar study locally, possibly as part of first degree dissertation. No tangible indications, such as those highlighted in the report under review, are currently available locally, and it would indeed be useful to be able to chart the future of the profession in order to assist local practitioners in tailoring their service offering to meet the demands of the future market.

Building Futures aims to address the big picture - How and where will we be living in 50 or 100 years’ time, when the climate has changed and cities are bigger than ever? What technologies will architects be using to design buildings and what new materials will they be specifying? How will the inevitable new technologies affect the buildings we all use every day? Building Futures has a permanent secretariat, based at the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) to establish and implement the work programme. Funding is provided by the RIBA, with additional project funding sought from outside partners. For further information, and to read the whole report, visit : www.buildingfutures.com.

All images and material sourced from “The Future for Architects?” published by Building Futures.

This synopsis was compiled by Perit Simone Vella Lenicker following a discussion with Charles Knevitt, former director of the RIBA Trust, during his recent visit to Malta.

thereusemap[®] and the wisdom of the snail

thereusemap[®] is an online database for the design and building industry, the first one linking offers and requests of materials on a constantly updated map of Europe. **thereusemap[®]** is a registered trademark and provides listing services for reuse of dismissed materials in the building industry. By displaying building and demolition activities on GoogleMaps, the project aims to raise awareness about use of land and to help create a materials palette for a society moving towards principles of dematerialisation. **thereusemap[®]** is focused on finding, through reuse, the right place for objects, by using one of the most powerful renewable resources: people's creativity.

thereusemap[®] began as a research project by Architect Elisa Andretti ©2010, funded by the Embassy of Italy in Malta. The project was awarded in occasion of EWWR- European Week for Waste Reduction 2010. Andretti developed the project after two years working in Malta as an architect and a Thesis in Sustainable Design. "The nature of the island and its hectic building activity made me think of developing a tool to optimize use of resources and raise awareness on ecological issues. Everyone can upload reclaimed materials on offer or materials requests oriented to design, architecture and the construction industry, by posting their message on the link *Contact us* on the website. Messages will be filtered

through the administrator and uploaded on the map as an interactive icon on its exact location in Europe. A tutorial is also available on the website (*How does it work?*). The map is conceived as a constantly updated, user-friendly instrument for:

1. Design: materials available for reuse will become part of the design process from the very beginning. This will help comparing reuse of materials from demolition (waste) to importing materials from abroad, widening the range of choices. The map is not restricted to conventional building materials.

2. Monitoring: the map will give an instant picture of use of land to people. This could also, in the long term, help to build cooperation between citizens, Authorities and NGOs. The map will show locations and quantity of each item updated, and flows of materials (requests/offers).

3. Advertising: LEED, Eco-label, and other registered marks are a good advert for the firm or the product which can boast them. Similarly, tracking products or projects on the reuse map could be a good advert for a firm which has its country at heart.



4. Educational Purposes: the map can be consulted by everyone. This helps raising awareness of the use we make of our land - what we cannot see, we usually pretend has not happened.

5. Restoration: the first and most important form of reuse. By tracking materials, locations and quantities, the map can be a powerful tool to put information into a network.

thereusemap[®] will accept any items whose exchange is not harmful or prohibited in any way, and that can be reused for any design purpose. The definition of "design purposes" include works

of art, restoration, ordinary maintenance of buildings, and architectural design at the concept stage. Designers, builders and owners can upload or request materials by filling in a contact form. Their offer/request, if acceptable according to the website policy, will then be uploaded on the map with its exact location, showing item and quantity.

Displaying location and quantity of materials is crucial not only for the successful exchange of items, as it will simplify exchange on a local basis without restricting the range of choice on European territory. It will also act as an awareness-

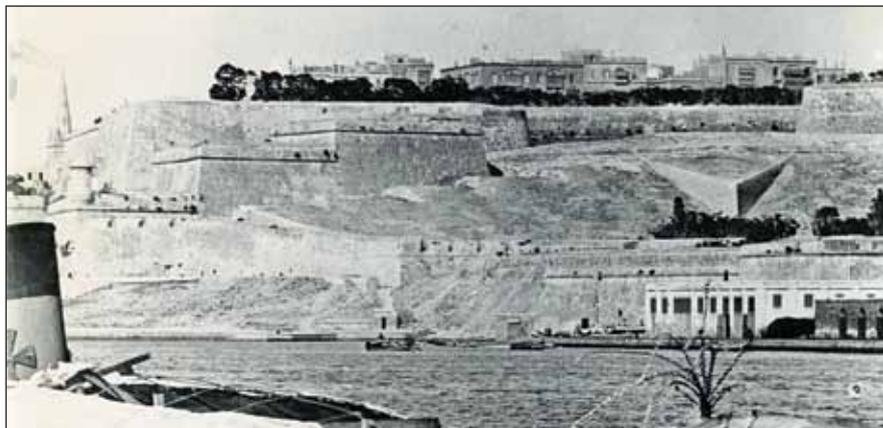
raising tool and as an indicator of materials flow. This will give designers full control and freedom regarding their choice. They will really be able to choose if it is more important to get a certain material or to get something that is cheaper or closer to site. Knowing connections between the ingredients of the project, tracking the products is the first step towards Ecodesign, the most effective way of preventing waste

Find out more about **thereusemap[®]** on:
www.thereusemap.com
www.facebook.com/pages/The-reuse-map

(Arcadis, 2009).

The concept of Ecodesign can be well described by this image from *Le Genre vernaculaire* (Ivan Illich 2005): "The snail constructs the delicate architecture of its shell by adding ever increasing spirals one after the other, but then it abruptly stops and winds back in the reverse direction. In fact, just one additional larger spiral would make the shell sixteen times bigger. Instead of being beneficial, it would overload the snail. Any increase in the snail's productivity would only be used to offset the difficulties created by the enlargement of the shell beyond its preordained limits. Once the limit to increasing spiral size has been reached, the problems of excessive growth multiply exponentially, while the snail's biological capability, in the best of cases, can only show linear growth and increase arithmetically".

The main actors involved in the building industry and in design related to the production of objects already own the most powerful tool to prevent waste: the ability to take care of it at the very concept stage of projects. **thereusemap[®]** is a tool that could lead to a new sensibility, by creating a palette of materials that is available at any moment to Engineers, Architects and Designers with the wisdom of the snail.



This photograph depicts the lost view of part of the Valletta landfront before the construction of a well-known hotel. Can you identify the location?

The winner of this competition will be entitled to a copy of the book "Modernist Malta: The Architectural Legacy." Send your entries to: **The Editor, The Architect Competition, Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira**, or by email on thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. The first correct entry drawn on the 31 August 2011 will win. Only residents of the Maltese Islands are eligible to participate. Members of the Editorial Board and their families are not eligible to participate.

The winner of the competition carried in Issue 55 is Mr Andrew Pace. Congratulations! The image published showed the Order's Foundry which served for the manufacturing of armaments on the left, whilst the building opposite is the Casa della Giornata.

NOW TO 14 JULY 2011; THE ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION, LONDON, UK

20 HOUSES: A NEW RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE – THE 2011 WALLPAPER* ARCHITECTS DIRECTORY

The annual Wallpaper* Architects Directory, now in its twelfth year, provides the ultimate little black book to the world's most promising young practices. For this year's Directory, Wallpaper* selected twenty studios from around the world. Each was given an open brief to design the ultimate rural retreat. These twenty houses were designed to be flexible and functional, but also formally and technically innovative, sitting on an isolated countryside site. The only sanction was the need for the homes to touch the ground lightly, with minimum disruption to the landscape. This exhibition unites the featured architects, showcasing all twenty bespoke homes in a single show; a swirling, imaginary topography, designed by emerging UK-based practice Naja de Ostos, who conceived the installation as a blossoming conceptual landscape. www.architecturefoundation.org.uk



NOW TO 14 AUGUST, 2011; THE LIGHTHOUSE, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS - LAND OF STONE

This exhibition showcases stone as a building material looking at the past, present and future possibilities for stone construction in Scotland. Starting with the quarrying process it looks at this diverse material investigating the sources and production process of stone products. www.ads.org.uk

NOW TO 21 AUGUST 2011; TATE BRITAIN, LONDON, UK

JAMES STIRLING: NOTES FROM THE ARCHIVE

It is eighteen years since James Stirling's death, and he is long due a retrospective exhibition. Given his close association with Tate, in the form of the Clore Gallery and Tate Liverpool, Tate Britain is an especially appropriate place to review his work. This exhibition, curated by the renowned architectural writer Anthony Vidler, draws on the Stirling archive held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal. It will be presented in the Clore Gallery, designed by Stirling and opened in 1987. Unfashionable at the time, it, like its designer, is the subject of renewed interest and appreciation. The exhibition will cover the whole of Stirling's career, from the iconic Engineering Building of 1959 at Leicester University through to the late 1990s, including built and unbuilt projects, drawings, photographs and furniture. www.tate.org.uk

NOW TO 28 AUGUST 2011; ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM - THE LOGE, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

ANNA HERINGER

Anna Heringer, a young German architect born in 1977, designed and realised for an NGO in Bangladesh a "handmade" school that highlights the use of the natural materials that the country is increasingly forsaking in favour of industrial materials. The aim of any school is to encourage the development of men and women

with confidence in their own abilities and the building of this school in Rudrapur, a poor rural region, was the occasion to render the population more independent and to make the best possible use of local resources. In 2007 Anna Heringer was awarded the Aga Khan Prize for this "beautiful, meaningful and humane" building. On the last page of the diary she kept while working at the site, she wrote: "I hope with all my heart that despite the political tensions this school will be able to remain a place of peace, freedom and dialogue." www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be

NOW TO 11 SEPTEMBER 2011; MAK GALLERY, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

SPAN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGNS - FORMATIONS

Matias del Campo and Sandra Manninger, former participants in the MAK Schindler Scholarship Program in Los Angeles, founded the Vienna office SPAN architecture & design in 2003, which designed the Austrian Pavilion at the EXPO 2010 in Shanghai jointly with Zeytinoglu ZT. Based on geometries of organic systems, the team develops visions of the architecture of form. Interactions between idea and medial application aid conceptual manipulation, and lead to unusual results. www.mak.at

NOW TO 18 SEPTEMBER 2011; ARKITEKTURMUSEET, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

MANMADE ENVIRONMENT - NEW NORDIC SCOPES

Through projects from the Nordic countries, the exhibition demonstrates that landscape architecture is about so much more than aesthetics. Used strategically it can supply sustainable solutions, promote health and improve living conditions for people in both urban and rural areas. It brings attention to the importance of finding alternative, interdisciplinary planning methods; strategies that emphasize conscious use of natural resources and combine new expertise and technology with awareness of local conditions, culture and identity. www.arkitekturmuseet.se

NOW TO 19 SEPTEMBER, 2011; MOMA, NEW YORK, USA

YOUNG ARCHITECTS PROGRAM 2011

This exhibition features the proposals of the five finalists in the MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program and the five finalists from the new affiliated program at the National Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome. Now in its 12th edition, the Young Architects Program at MoMA PS1 offers emerging architectural talent the opportunity to design and present innovative projects, challenging each year's winners to develop highly innovative designs for a temporary outdoor installation at MoMA PS1 that provides shade, seating, and water. The architects must also work within guidelines that address environmental issues, including sustainability and recycling.



For the first time, MoMA and MoMA PS1 are partnering with another institution, the National Museum of XXI Century Arts of Rome in Rome (MAXXI), to create an

international Young Architects Program network. The winning designs, by Interboro Partners (Brooklyn) at MoMA PS1 and stARTT (Rome) at MAXXI, will be on view throughout the summer in the respective museum courtyards. The project submissions of all the finalists—including Raffaella De Simone/Valentina Mandalari (Palermo), Ghigos Ideas (Lissone/Milan), Asif Khan (London), and Langarita Navarro Arquitectos (Madrid) for Rome; and formlessfinder (Brooklyn), IJP (London), MASS Design Group (Cambridge), and Matter Practice (Brooklyn) for New York—are exhibited at both venues. www.moma.org

NOW TO 2 OCTOBER 2011; GALLERY OF ALVAR AALTO MUSEUM, FINLAND

PARIS GLASS. THE AALTO VASE – 75 YEARS ON

The exhibition Paris glass will be showing Aalto vases, which have now been in production for 75 years, and telling anecdotes about them. The exhibition will also take a peep at the debut milieu of the vases as it was then in Alvar Aalto's Finnish Pavilion at the Paris Exposition. How the vase actually found its way onto the tables at the Savoy restaurant will also be revealed at the exhibition. The Aalto vases are based on a series of glassware designed by Alvar Aalto, which originated as the result of a design competition held by the Karhula-Iittala glassworks in 1936. Aalto's proposal had a lively and imaginative name, 'Eskimoerindens skinbyxa' (The Eskimo woman's leather trousers). The first actual series of glassware was completed for display in the Finnish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exposition. One of these vases, originally known as 'Parisglass', found its way on to the tables of the Savoy restaurant in Helsinki. Consequently, this particular model was given the name 'The Savoy vase'. www.alvaraalto.fi

9 JULY TO 16 OCTOBER 2011; DESIGN MUSEUM, GENT, BELGIUM

DIE ESSENZ DER DINGE - DESIGN AND THE ART OF REDUCTION

In these times of crisis, are we going to cut back on materials and go for products with a longer life expectancy? Or is modern design by nature equal to efficiency? The exhibition "The art of reduction" is returning to the basics. Or rather: to the kind of design that illustrates the "art of reduction". After all, simplification is not only a governing principle in the history of the design world, but during practically any rocky economic period it has always come to the fore with a vengeance. The exhibition is looking for the explanation behind the rational design logic in aspects such as the production process, spatial limitations or aesthetic trends. Design icons from le Corbusier and Gerrit Rietveld to Eero Saarinen are set against similar figures from, for instance, the worlds of fashion, food design and art. www.design.museum.gent.be

2 – 4 NOVEMBER 2011; CCIB, BARCELONA, SPAIN

WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL

World Architecture Festival is the world's largest, live, truly inclusive and interactive global architectural awards programme. It is a unique meeting point for architects, suppliers and clients, attracting hundreds of entries and visitors from all over the world. www.worldarchitecturefestival.com